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AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY INTO THE BARRIERS THAT AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN FACE AS SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A GUERILLA WARFARE

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AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY INTO THE BARRIERS THAT AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN FACE AS SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A GUERILLA WARFARE

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the three women who agreed to share their experiences in the principalship with me. I am hoping that other African-American secondary women principals can know some things are still the same.

I would also dedicate this work to my family. My sister Charlotte Everette, and my four brothers, Byron, Vaughn, Alvin, and Arthur Lusby.

In memory of my parents:

Solomon Lusby 1925-1970
Roberta Lusby 1925-1995
And my brother
Solomon Lusby, Jr. 1952-1985

They all would have been supportive if they were here.

To one of my biggest cheerleaders, Mrs. Nannie K. Presley, my ninety-seven year-old friend who constantly encourages me.

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To all those who were in the co-hort, I have finally joined the finished group. Thank you Dr. Jamie Polk, Dr. Sylvia Williams, Dr. Regina DeLoach, and Dr. Gene Shelketl. I also want to thank those coming behind me Dr. Cynthia Walker and Dr. Kimberly Stormer and Dr. Jacquetta Haywood and Dr. Shannon Adams– I know you will finish, too. Also thanks to Dr. Linda Robinson at Cameron University who constantly asked if I needed help.

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First I would like to thank my God and my Savior for showing me favor. There were times I thought there were too many distractions. Then I stopped looking at how big my problem was and start looking at how big my God is. To God be the glory for all he has done for me and continues to do.

I must acknowledge and dedicate my gratitude and thankfulness to my committee members who have been instrumental in supporting this study. Dr. William Frick, my advisor, you have encouraged me and provided me with guidance. When my first advisor left, you stepped in with a plan. To the other members on my committee, Dr. Joan Smith, Dr. Catherine John, Dr. Susan Laird, and Dr. Gregg Garn – thank you. With all of your wisdom, I am fortunate & grateful.

To my children Michelle, Lisa, Isaac, Jr. and my niece, Alexis you all are my heart. To my granddaughter Raegan and my great niece, Kharrington, you are my joy.

To my best friend, my lover, my husband, Isaac. His love, his encouragement, his money, his patience, and his prodding have been the catalyst for my finishing this dissertation. Thank you for your undying love and unwavering support.

My favorite verse is:

Let us not be weary and well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Galatians 6:9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This research study was conducted as an autoethnographic study of me and supplemented with three African-American female administrators' perspectives and experiences as school administrators. The narrative process was used to tell all of our stories. The narrative process enabled me to tell my story and how my story relates to the stories of the other African- American female principals and administrators.

The purpose of the study was two-fold: a) to understand what it means to be an African American women secondary administrator and b) to better determine how African American women secondary administrators can eradicate barriers and be seen as highly qualified and competent applicants.

All of the participants were recorded and their actual words were used. The data was acquired through an open-ended interview process. After recordings were transcribed, collective themes emerged. All of the women knew they would not have been as successful without a higher power, their families, and a sense of community that impacted their lives. They realized that education was a must. They knew to get all the education they could and each one of them cared sincerely about their students. All of them realized that they were alienated from other administrators in their district.

This dissertation will allow the reader to experience my journey as a child, young adult, teacher, and an administrator; along with the life experiences of three other administrators. It is my hope that our stories will help someone else who has experienced a journey similar to ours.

Chapter I

Introduction, Purpose, Rationale

Introduction

This study is based on heuristic inquiry, "a scientifically rigorous and artistically meaningful expression of human experience" formulated in large measure on a phenomenological approach that seeks to discover the nature, meaning, and significance of human experience in its varied forms (Casterline, 2009, p.1). I will use the narrative process to present my personal experience as an African-American secondary female principal through an autoethnographic study. The narrative process enables me to tell my story and how my story relates to the story of other African-American female principals and administrators. This dissertation will follow the typical organization of a terminal degree thesis that includes five chapters that will be detailed at the end of this chapter.

This descriptive study explores barriers one African-American woman faced and continues to face as a secondary school principal and district administrator. This description is then subsequently supplemented by the experiences and views of other black female administrators. Racism and sexism are two of the major barriers encountered by African-American women who aspire to leadership positions. This kind of discrimination exists within public schooling as well. Many times, it is hard to discern whether discrimination is because of race, sex, or a combination of both.

Men greatly outnumber women in all of the prestigious professions in American society, including law, medicine, and academia. The male dominance of public schools is particularly striking because women comprise 70 percent of all teachers, the group from which school administrators are drawn (Chase & Bell, 1993). Male domination

over the common school curriculum assumes that the male experience represents the whole society. Discrimination against women of color arises, at least in part, from the values, beliefs and expectations of business and professional leaders, a great majority of whom are white males. Unless a woman of color can somewhat fit herself into a mold firmly established in and created by a culture of white males, she is likely to be treated as an alien in the workplace (Gregory, 2002).

Women in administration face many challenges in their careers. When the additional characteristics of racial and ethnic differences are included, the challenges increase. The struggle to achieve fair representation and adequate advancement within school districts is a problem that disturbs minority women (Marcano 1997). Researchers point to various forms of blatant and subtle discrimination that keep women from breaking the "glass ceiling" in educational leadership (Chase & Bell, 1993).

Currently, there are inequities in the representation of females in higher administrative positions in public schools. These patterns have determined the constraints women have faced and continue to face when they attempt to enter public administration (Byrd & Blade, 2004). Employment equity for women at all levels of school administration is not a new topic for university educators to consider as they prepare candidates for these positions. Under-representation of women in school administration contrasts with the high percentage of teachers who are women (Bell & Chase, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1987).

As of the mid-1900s, women comprised 50 percent of the workforce. Women held 13 percent of the management positions and only 7 percent of executive positions

(Hagberg, 1998). In the areas of school administration, men outnumbered women four to one (Lynch, 1990). In the years between 1928 and 1984, the number of women principals gradually dropped from 55 percent to 18 percent. Women's representation in school administration is far from being proportionate to their members in education (Hagberg& Sloan, 1999). Although women comprise a majority of the nation's public school teaching force, most school administrators are white males, and at the highest level of public school administration, the superintendency, there seems to be a great deal of resistance to gender and minority integration (Bell & Chase, 1993). It is evident from these statistics that the overall percentage of African-American (AA) women who represent leadership positions is minuscule. Thus, the meager percentage represented by women of color demonstrates how severely under-represented women of other racial and/or ethnic groups are in public school administration (Gupton & Slick, 1995). In the year 2000, 44 percent of all principals in public schools were women. Of the total number of principals represented, only ten percent were African-American, and four percent identified themselves as Hispanic (NCES, 2002). Taking into consideration the United States Census (2000) reported 12.9 percent of the total United States population identifying themselves as Black/African-American and 12.5 percent identifying themselves as being of Hispanic origin, a greater representation of minority administrators is needed in the public schools to equate with the demographic makeup of the population in this country (Byrd & Blake, 2000).

On a more personal note, I feel that racism has the greatest disabling effect on how African-American women progressed; African-American women could only make limited contributions to society because of their educational limitations. Many African-

American females have gained an education; however, they are still not looked upon favorably in many educational contexts.

Once African-American women enter the workforce, the rules change. Rules were designed by men and a predominantly Euro-centric culture but those rules determine the success or failure of African-American women. Regardless of the fact that 66% of the teaching force was female, the number of women in school administration was different. According to Hudson and Rea (1998), women held five percent of the superintendent positions, 20.6% of assistant superintendent positions and 30% of the principalships in 1993. Among the common reasons that women have been under-represented in school administration have been negative perceptions of their ability to lead (Hudson & Rea, 1998). Rendered invisible, women were regarded as neither valuable, legitimate subjects nor significant contributors to knowledge bases in various occupational or professional disciplines. Ellison (1952) stated, "I am an invisible woman… I am a woman of substance, of flesh and bone . . . and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible simply because people refuse to see me" (cited in Bloom &Erlandson, 2003, p. 339).

Racism in particular has had the greatest disabling effect on the status and progress of African-American women (McClain & Spencer, 2000). The African-American woman has had to cope with problems dating back to slavery, with the emasculation of the African-American male, along with the unique problem of childbearing under conditions of slavery. McClain and Spencer (2000) contend that from slavery until contemporary times, the African-American female could make only limited contributions to society at large because of educational limitations and

inadequate recognition from a dominant society. Even improving education status has not ensured social mobility. Even though more African-American females have gained an education, they are still not part of the upward social mobility experienced by many others.

African-American women have been exploited and persecuted throughout modern history, suffering at the hands of other people, and rising out of slavery. Treated as nothing more than a person's property, African-American women were denied respect (McCollum, 2005). McCollum contends that these women had no purpose or direction, and with no past, they had a grim future. African-American women suffered beatings, verbal insults, denial, and ridicule. They labored through degrading tasks and conceded to their slave-master's sexual advances. These women gave in to such terrible happenings to protect their husbands, their children, and loved ones from being beaten and for themselves and those close to them from being sold. It was the only way of elevating their social rank in order to protect themselves from vicious overseers and mistresses (Jones, 1983).

In view of the telling account depicted in the preceding paragraph, how does an African-American woman move from a historical bottomless pit, such as slavery, to become a school principal in contemporary times? Fanny Jackson Coppin, born a slave, graduated from Oberlin College and became the first African-American woman to become a school principal (Ellis, Patrick & Wesley, 1997). She summed up the sentiments of many African-American women striving for an administrative position or principalship in her statement:

> We should strive to make known to all men the justice of our claims to the same employment as other men under the same conditions. We do not ask

> that any one of our people shall be put in a position because he is a colored person, but we do ask that he shall not be kept out of a position because he is a colored person. An open field and not favors is all that is requested. (Ellis, Patrick & Wesley, 1997, p. 23)

Kenya Eddings, an Ohtli participant (*Ohtli* means "pathway" in the Nahuatllanguage, and Ohtli are women of color who meet to discuss leadership) told how she felt about being an African-American woman:

> As an African-American who happens to be a woman, I already had two strikes against me. It was never enough just to "get by." Through both word and deed I learned the art of 'wearing the mask;' mastering and embracing the culture, which was not mine, all the while holding on to and never giving up on the one who welcomed my birth. (Rodriguez & McCollum, 2005, p. 2).

A previous study by McCollum (2005) revealed that African-American women felt they encountered numerous barriers which included stereotypes of incompetence due to race, assimilation or loss of their "Blackness" for others to be comfortable with them, limited access to informal and social networks within their organizations, and a hollow commitment to the advancement of women and minorities within their organizations.

Prejudice still exists regardless if Americans do not admit it. It exists inside and outside the classroom. It has been more than 140 years since the abolition of slavery, and yet it is not long enough to erase the prejudiced thoughts of egotistical, pious people who still believe their race is superior, whereas African-Americans are still invisible to, or worse, discriminated against, by dominant cultures, White male or otherwise.

Interestingly enough, African-American principals are commonly called upon to serve in difficult administrative positions located in school districts with financial difficulties, run-down buildings, little student discipline, and where academic achievement levels are lower within a community that is typically divided. African-

American principals are usually given leadership roles in schools where the student population is predominately students of color. They are placed in schools with unreasonable expectations. These issues are often related to the struggle of educational "adequacy". This struggle is essentially the fallback position from continuously frustrated efforts to achieve basic fairness or equality and far less than a robust redistribution of resources in order to achieve equity. Even though these principals are often successful in surpassing job targets and expectations, they are frequently removed from the school without explanation by those in authority.

Compared with non-minority women and other racial minority groups, there are few African-Americans in the graduate training pipeline for educational administrative positions (Patitu& Hinton, 2003). Limited numbers of African-Americans in general are entering the teaching force. Even fewer African-Americans in general, let alone African-American females, are aspiring to principalships.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and re-interpret the life experiences and leadership of one African-American woman administrator, me, and how those life experiences and school leadership roles are shared with other female school leaders of color in Oklahoma. Additionally, I wish to better determine how AA secondary women administrators can eradicate barriers and be seen as highly qualified and competent applicants. The intended purpose of this autoethnographic study is to provide the opportunity for the reader to become a co-participant in my recorded experience because ultimately humans are storytellers (Chang, 2008).

This study seeks to identify the barriers, glass ceiling, prejudices, and inequities that African-American women in secondary administration have faced and continue to face. We still live in a predominately White society, and that life was, and is, harder for African-American people. Further, institutional arrangements have remained characteristically male dominated. Life is bound to be more confusing for women. Consider African-American women in corporate management for whom life is hard and confusing – black and female – creating two strikes against the ambitious African-American female.

As I conducted document and text research on the subject of African-American women in educational positions of administration and the principalship, it was difficult to find a substantial volume of related literature. A renowned contributor to African-American women's studies, confirmed the lack of African-American women in literature and histories. She said,

> If we are unaware of Black women… it is not because they were not here; if we know nothing of their literature and culture, it is because they left no records. It is because their lives and their work have been profoundly ignored. Both as the producers of culture and as subjects of the cultural production of others, however, their traces are everywhere. (Author, year, p. 65)

Significance of the Study

There have been substantial amounts of literature written on leadership. Research has also included an abundance of literature on characteristics of effective schooling with great emphasis on practical approaches in reaching all children. However, women's issues in education continue to be under-researched when it comes to leadership in education.

Another reason for this study is a need for public awareness. A number of people who are not of my color will disagree with this study. They have not swum in the same waters. Many times, it is difficult to discern whether my journey is difficult because of color or gender or the dynamic intersectionality of both within a specific, historically-bound setting. Although African-American women have come a long way, they are still the minority. People need to see the world from other people's perspectives as well as their own. It is good for others to take time to understand cultural differences and how those differences affect African-American women's interactions with the majority culture. After all these years, from the time of slavery, many changes have still not taken place.

Background

As an African-American female, I have had some horrific experiences. This study will be an effort to help other women of color to know their experiences are not isolated incidents. They existed in the past, they exist now, and unfortunately, change does not seem to be immediately forthcoming.

This research represents an account of my experiences with unfair practices as well as the experiences of fellow African-American female principals in my unnamed school district and beyond. We did outstanding jobs as building principals – so our evaluations stated. We were managers, leaders, disciplinarians, and innovators. That was not enough. We were never allowed to make our own decisions. Every move we made was micromanaged. Still, our schools were well run, and our test scores were above state mandates. That was not enough. My fellow principals and I were transferred from principal positions to other jobs in the district. We were not trained to

do the jobs we were transferred to, nor did we have anyone to train us. We were put in these positions, but the positions were considered a promotion. We were now directors, which were considered board-level jobs. These jobs offered no raise in pay. We were all replaced by White women or White men. Our district went from five African-American secondary principals to one. The one African-American who remains a principal is not at a regular school. He was transferred to an alternative school. All our district secondary schools are run by White men and White women.

A study that employs me as both the subject and the researcher provides the impetus for this autoethnographic study. I have traced the experiences and incidents of my own life and my professional work including administrative transitions using qualitative accounts expressed in narrative form employing inquiry processes that are heuristic in nature.

History can be a great teacher. I have had my own share of encounters with history. This dissertation will allow me to share my own experiences and the experiences of others in our search for recognition as leaders in education.

Terms

Autoethnography – A qualitative research method that allows a person to write in a personalized style drawing on his or her experience, written in first person and features dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness as related to stories affected by history, social structure, and culture.

Critical Race Theory - A way of understanding the social world that emphasizes the socially constructed nature of race, considers judicial conclusions to be the result of the workings of power, and opposes the continuation of all forms of subordination. The

inquiry is the branch of critical legal studies concerned with issues of racism and racial subordination and discrimination.

Glass Ceiling - A term that refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is halted at a particular level because of some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism. This situation is referred to as a "ceiling", as there is a limitation blocking upward advancement, and glass (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally unwritten and unofficial policy. The "glass ceiling" is distinguished from formal barriers to advancement, such as education or experience requirements.

Inquiry - Any process that has the aim of augmenting knowledge, resolving doubt, or solving a problem.

Heuristic Inquiry - A process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process. While understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I, I have given the introduction to the study and a brief overview of the important considerations pertaining to this dissertation.
I have also given definitions to explain unfamiliar terms.

In Chapter II, I will present a comprehensive scholarly literature review on African-American females as administrators and in positions of leadership in education. I will also support the justification for the use of the critical race theory in education and

will discuss relevant literature on the qualitative methods of research utilizing autoethnography.

Chapter III will detail a research plan using the qualitative methods of autoethnography in addition to standard qualitative research procedures utilized within the field of education. The population and sample of subjects will be explained. The design of the research will be evidenced by narratives obtained from the participants, which will consist of other African-American female principals in the state of Oklahoma to determine whether their life experiences were either consonant or dissonant with my own.

In Chapter IV, I will narrate, critically analyze, and culturally interrogate my own story, which will encompass autoethnographic features and a heuristic perspective. I will also discuss the narratives given by the participants in this study. The narratives will depict the lived experiences and challenges we have faced as black, female public school administrators. I will provide an autoethnographic account as primary findings of this investigation while weaving the perspectives and experiences of other participants into my analysis in order to construct a critical composite story (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

In Chapter V, I will provide a discussion, reflection, and interpretation of the results of the study. Implications for school leadership will be considered and explored.

A story-poem written by Sojourner Truth in 1851, a slave, who took this name instead of her own when she became a traveling preacher, concludes this chapter. She was an advocate for women of color. This was part of the speech she gave at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio (Brah & Phoenix, 2004).

Ain't I a Woman?

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter.
I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and women at the North,
all talking about rights,
the white men will be in a fix pretty soon.
But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages,
And lifted over ditches,
And to have the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helps me into carriages,
or over mud-puddles,
or gives me any best place!
And ain't I a woman?
Look at me! Look at my arm?
I have ploughed and planted,
And gathered in to barns and no one could head me!
And ain't I a woman?
I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it –
And bear the lash as well!
And ain't I a woman?
I have borne thirteen children,
and seen most all sold off to slavery,
and when I cried out with my mother's grief,
none but Jesus heard me!
And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head;
What's this they call it?
(member of the audience whispers, "intellect")
That's it honey.
What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights?
If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart,
Wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there,
He says women can't have as much rights as men,
'Cause Christ wasn't a woman!
Where did your Christ come from?
From God and a woman!
Man had nothing to do with Him.
If the first woman God ever made was strong enough
To turn the world upside down all alone,
These women together ought to be able to turn it back,
And get it right side up again!

And now they is asking to do it,
The men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me,
And now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Chapter II

Critical Race Theory (CRT) Origin and Background

Critical Race Theory (CRT) became an outgrowth, but remained a separate entity, from a legal movement known as Critical Legal Studies (CLS). Critical legal studies was a leftist legal movement (Ladson-Billings, 1998) that had challenged traditional legal scholarship, which focused on doctrinal and policy analysis and was in favor of a different form of law directed to the specificity of both individuals and groups related to social and cultural contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Scholars of CRT challenged the idea that the civil rights movement was representative of social transformation and attempted to expose its internal and external inconsistencies by claiming that legal ideology helped to legitimize "America's class structure" (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1350, cited in Ladson-Billings, p. 20). According to Ladson-Billings, it was argued that CLS in its portrayal of "U.S. Society as a meritocracy" (p. 21) did not include racism as a factor. As a result, CRT was an outgrowth of CLS.

Isaksen (2001) explains that CRT emerged as a race-based critique "growing from the National Critical Legal Studies conferences that took place at the Harvard and UC-Berkeley Law Schools in the early to mid-1980s" (p. 696). Isaksen contends that CRT was an intellectual movement consisting of African-American progressive law scholars who questioned the sustaining of White supremacy. They were critical of the way the law served the privileged and powerful in the U.S. while denying the rights of those who were poor to be able to use the courts for redress. As a result of this critique of the inequities of the law in society, another group of critical scholarship took up the gauntlet on this issue and argued that the CLS failed to challenge the racialized nature

of the law and the effects it had on persons of color. These scholars, including Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Angela Harris, Patricia Williams and Kimberle Crenshaw, were all legal scholars of color, and presented specific claims that gave strength to their arguments (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009).

According to Isaksen (2001), Delgado compiled a list of leading law review publications dealing with civil rights, which revealed that all had been written by White males. It appeared that if any authority regarding race was needed, rather than consult a person of that race, they would cite each other or would contact the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, thereby excluding the minority scholars from "civil rights scholarship" (p. 698). Additionally, a student boycott at Harvard Law School occurred because of the failure of Harvard to grant tenure to a woman of color, which was demanded by Derrick Bell, Harvard's first African-American law professor. Bell's course at Harvard was "Race, Racism and American Law," which he believed should be taught by an African-American. Students also demanded that another person of color be hired. When university administration refused to comply, Bell left Harvard (Isaksen, 2001).

CRT Defined

CRT theorists support the contention that civil rights laws serve the interests of whites. CRT can be a powerful explanatory tool for the sustained inequity that people of color experience. Dixon and Rousseau (2005) contended that emergence of CRT required a new vocabulary that could name the race-related structures in law and society not heretofore set out in existing scholarship. According to Dixon and Rousseau's research, six unifying themes defined the CRT movement:

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.

2. CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy.
3. CRT challenges a historicism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law… .Critical race theorists. . . adopt a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage.
4. CRT insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society.
5. CRT is interdisciplinary.
6. CRT works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6, cited in Dixon & Rousseau, p. 9).

The use of the education-centered definition of CRT as an analytical tool is referenced by Smith and Stovall (2008), which incorporated the education-centered definition of Solorzano and Ornelas (2004). CRT consists of the basic insights, perspectives, methods. . . that seek to identify, analyze and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom. CRT in education includes the following five elements that form the basic model: 1) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination in education, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology around school failure, 3) the commitment to social justice in education, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) a transdisciplinary perspective (cited in Smith & Stovall, 2008, p. 137).

According to Smith and Stovall, these five elements play an important part in shaping policy for reformation of education. The key focus of Smith and Stovall's study centered on a community in Chicago in which the mayor appointed school boards and schools were designed to attract potential middle- and upper-class homebuyers. Supposedly, federal funds were to be used to rebuild old, deteriorating schools and to encourage charter and private schools to provide options for children. Smith and Stovall used CRT to support their arguments that class and not racial justice governed the city's actions.

Concepts of CRT

Permanence of Racism/Racism is Natural

The concept of CRT takes into account that issues of racism are still a prevalent form of discrimination and that these issues should be considered in policies and programs. CRT requires that in today's society, the role played by race must be acknowledged (McCray, Wright, &Beachum, 2008). According to McCray et al., CRT "not only analyzes social injustices through a racial prism, but it also seeks to remedy these social injustices through progressivism" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Whiteness as Property

The term "whiteness as property" did not convey the same meaning as one thinks of property, such as owning a home, car, or tangible asset. Instead, theorists have contended that in the U.S., society property is a right instead of a physical object (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). In other words, the conception in this light was that property referred to, in terms of right, whiteness. The central characteristic of whiteness as property was described as "the legal legitimation of expectations of power and

control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination" (Dixon & Rousseau, 2005, p 8). It has been further contended that the law gave "holders" of whiteness the same "privileges and benefits," which were accorded to holders of any other type of property (p. 8). Among those privileges and benefits was the right to exclude, particularly in regards to education. For instance, the right to exclude was seen when African-Americans were denied schooling, creating separate schools, and in more recent years the use of vouchers (private schools being funded with public funds) and other forms of schools of choice.

CRT and Methodologies in Research

Parker and Lynn (2002) address issues of qualitative research methodology and CRT. According to Parker and Lynn, CRT has become more widely used in qualitative research through narratives. CRT was not intended to be used as an interview format. Parker and Lynn contend that "qualitative research, action, and CRT can be seen as a way to link theory and understanding about race from critical perspectives to actual practice and actions going on in education for activist social justice and change" (p. 157). Linking CRT to education can help in relating theory to practice where issues of race are involved.

Critical race methodology is defined by Solorzano and Yosso (2002) as a theoretically grounded approach to research. This approach consists of four concepts. These are:

1) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process… It challenged the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing

how these three elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color;

2) challenges the traditional research paradigms, text, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color;
3) offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination;
4) and focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color. (p. 131).

According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), in order to develop critical race methodology, its theoretical foundation must be defined. CRT was intended to develop a jurisprudence to work towards eliminating racism in American law and as a framework in education to eliminate subordination that was based on "gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin" (p. 132).

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) explain that there are certain elements of CRT and methodology in education that form its basic insights and perspectives. These include an intercentricity of race and racism and other forms of subordination, challenging a dominant ideology, centrality of experiential knowledge, and a transdisciplinary perspective. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) also indicate that CRT makes use of stories and counter-stories, personal stories or narratives, other people's stories or narratives, and composite stories or narratives. These stories or narratives are sources of personal experiences and autobiographical accounts of events in race, racism, sexism, and other obstacles encountered in overcoming the inequalities in education.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Education is not outlined in the U.S. Constitution. States govern by legislature and laws (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Therefore, states have the power to encourage legislation and to pass laws designed to control the profile of education. According to Ladson-Billings, CRT viewed official school curriculums as being designed to favor White supremacy. The reasoning for this was that stories of African-Americans were being muted and ignored whenever the dominant culture or power was challenged. An example of this was in the telling of the story about Rosa Parks. She had been described as a tired seamstress with no mention of the many years she had participated in social justice work. Ladson-Billings contends that too often instructional strategies tended to presume that African-American students were less able or capable.

Disparities in academic achievement and success between African Americans and Whites have long existed (Lynn, 2006). According to Lynn, one of the reasons for this was that African-Americans have too often been viewed as a homogenous group. This has affected school performance by producing a mindset in students' attitudes and work habits. Lynn contends that CRT was concerned with ways race operated in the schools and in society and that it had started to tackle these issues in such a manner as to bring positive change. CRT in education "is an approach to understanding the problems in education through the lens of communities of color, and . . . begins to create a discourse that articulates the ways in which teachers of color can initiate the process of ending racial subordination" (Solorzano &Yosso, 2002). Lynn further contends that CRT could be defined as a method of interpreting and analyzing race,

racialism, and racism in society. A crucial aspect of CRT is the use of narratives and legal cases as examples to be used in telling about racial injustice.

Lynn addressed the 'why' of African American education. Lynn proposed utilizing CRT for analyzing African American education rather than for trying to trace the origins of the first Black school. One concept of CRT is the idea that racism is a natural and a necessary part of a society that has been built on the principles of White supremacy. Actually, the history of education for African-Americans has been one of struggles, hard times, and disappointment. Lynn relates that Derrick Bell (1980) held that Whites did not allow progress of any significance for racial groups to happen unless "they were served by it" (cited in Lynn, 2006, p. 117). Lynn concludes that if African-American school achievement were comparable to that of Whites at that time, it would not have a significant impact on the rates of African-Americans going to college, or that African-Americans would suddenly be included and integrated into society. Further, Lynn concludes that the use of CRT can provide a greater theoretical conceptualization on how to transform African-American education.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) examined CRT in education covering the immediate past ten-year period. In their research, the authors made use of various databases in education, social science, and legal studies. According to Dixon and Rousseau, struggles to reduce inequity are a central part of CRT along with a commitment toward change. Progress has been made toward developing a critical race theory of education, but there is still an unfulfilled promise to be kept.

Voice

Stories provide context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting. Much of the scholarship of CRT focuses on the role of voice in bringing additional power to the legal discourses of racial justice. According to Dixon and Rousseau (2005), voice is the theme in legal studies. CRT scholars make use of "personal narratives and stories as valid forms of evidence and thereby challenges a numbers only approach to documenting inequity or discrimination that tends to certify discrimination from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective" (p. 11). Dixon and Rousseau make a strong point of explaining that "voice" is not used in the singular form or indicates that there is only one voice for all persons of color. It is further made clear that although there is not one voice, there is still a common experience of racism found in stories of "people of color" that permit the use of the term "voice" (p. 11). Storytelling and narrative have been widely used for the purposes of exploring race and racism. In areas of higher education, attempts have been made to silence these voices. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that "the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system . . . Without authentic voices of people of color it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities" (p. 58, cited in Dixson & Rousseau, p. 13).

Voice means "naming your reality" and links form and substance in scholarship; therefore, CRT scholars use parables, chronicles, stories, counter-stories, poetry, fixation, and revisionist histories to illustrate the false necessity and irony of much of current civil rights doctrine (Ladson-Billings, 1998). According to Ladson-Billings, the voice component of CRT provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of

the oppressed, a first step in understanding the complexities of racism and beginning a process of judicial redress. Ladson-Billings contends that "the voice of people of color is required for a deep understanding of the educational system" (p. 24).

CRT in Legal Cases Affecting Education

The fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown…* (1954) was commemorated recently. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) examined this case from the standpoint of critical race theory. Regardless of the fact that the ruling in this case was intended to have a strong impact on education, critical race theorists, as well as others, raised the question of if it accomplished its intended purpose. According to Dixson and Rousseau, after examining the factors in the case itself and the so-called reconstruction that followed, it was determined that it failed to accomplish the racial reform that was anticipated. Derrick Bell (2004), one of the founders of CRT, referred to the case as a "magnificent mirage" (Bell, 2004, cited in Dixson & Rousseau, p. 18).

Dixson and Rousseau found that recent reports revealed large numbers of African-American and Latino students were attending predominately minority schools. They cited as an example that the 2001-2002 school year in Michigan showed approximately 63% of its Black students were going to schools that were 90-100% minority. As a result, a number of minority schools face unequal educational opportunity, partly because of concentrated poverty. An analysis of why the Supreme Court suddenly decided after years of pressure to take action against the inequity of African-Americans in education indicated that the ruling was done more for self-interest for Whites than racial justice.

Bell (1995) discusses the principles in *Brown*. According to Bell, despite the ruling in *Brown,* which ordered the racial desegregation of public schools, many African-American children go to public schools that are considered both "racially isolated and inferior" (p. 73). Bell makes specific references to Professor Herbert Wechsler, a lawyer and civil rights advocate, who had raised questions about the shortcomings and flaws in the *Brown* decision. Bell contends that the court's decision in *Brown* was based on the factor that the decision would be of value to Whites because it would give credibility to America's efforts to win over emerging third world people who had believed that segregation had damaged the prestige of the United States. Southern states believed that segregation was damaging to their profits gained from industrialization. Bell calls the divergence of racial interest as "interest convergence" (p. 79). In other words, Whites reap the benefits of desegregation. Bell contends that many states were in no hurry to carry out the orders of *Brown*. In fact many states did not. Over the years, the racial balance may have changed the appearance of dual school systems, but it has not eliminated racial discrimination. There is clear evidence that de facto racial segregation still exists in the United States (Orfield, 2001).

Women's Education

The history of women educators began at the beginning of time. Women taught their children how to survive. In early times, many countries educated the genders differently. Ancient Egypt honored women yet educated only boys. Women of ancient China were even less favored. During the Golden Age of Greece, the Athenians excluded both women and slaves from education. The Romans provided education for boys, whereas girls' education was only household duties. In England, nuns provided

education for girls, primarily of the aristocracy. In France, no need for educating women was determined (Koontz, 1972). In the 1700's, Rousseau wrote:

> The whole education should be relative to men; to please them, to be useful to them; to make themselves honored and loved by them, to educate the young, to care for the older, to admire them, to console them, to make life agreeable and sweet to them – these are the duties of women in every age." Napoleon Bonaparte's advice went like this: "I do not think that we need trouble ourselves with any plan of instruction of young females…marriage is all they look to." (Koontz, 1972)

Females are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration. Women and members of minority groups are becoming certified as school administrators at a rate that is not reflected in the number of administrative positions that they actually hold. Shakeshaft (1999) concludes that this means that "women and minority candidates are certified in much larger numbers than they are chosen for administration positions" (p. 100).

If our knowledge of White women principals and superintendents is only partial, even more scant is our knowledge of women of color who are administrators. It is thought their ways may be diverse as their cultural heritage, but all rise directly from their own complex social and cultural histories. (Ah Nee-Benham, &Cooper, 1998, p. 140)

Bell and Chase (1993) argue that from the beginning of the 1980's, federal policies have focused on the establishment and enforcement of performance standards rather than on equity standards. Education has been the obstacle keeping women from attaining equal status in society and has separated them from their male counterparts. Before women gained the right and privilege of higher education, they were believed to be lower class (Shakeshaft, 1999).

After examining history textbooks, the contributions of women appear to be called into question. It seems that our history books are biased. Discrimination in education is one of the most damaging injustices women suffer. It denies them equal education and equal employment opportunity, contributing to their second-class image. "It is clear that women who make up the higher percentage of the population have endured humiliation, discrimination, and universal slavery in either a literal or figurative sense" (Koontz, 1972).

Women comprise more than half of the teaching workforce in our nation but hold fewer than half of all principalships (NCES, 2000). The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education StatisticsSchools and Staffing Survey (SASS) reported during 1993–94 and 1999–2000 that although the percentage of female principals in public education increased between 35 percent and 44 percent, the majority of principals were men during those years. Furthermore, in 1999–2000, a total of 83,790 principals worked in public schools across the United States (NCES, 2000). Of that total, 47,130 were men, and 36,660 were women. Almost 83 percent were white, about 11 percent were African American, and only 5 percent were Hispanic. According to Logan (1998), more women principals are hired at the elementary level than are hired as high school principals. In K–12 education, females comprise 83% of the elementary and 54% of the secondary teaching populations, yet they constituted only 52% of the principals in elementary schools and 25% of high school positions (Henke, 1996).

Women In Transition

Women in general hold nearly 16% of CEO jobs. According to the American Council on Education, women comprise approximately 20% of all community college president jobs. However, in public education, women represent fewer than 5% of the more than 15,000 superintendents and 20% of the principalships across the country (Morgan, 1992). Although women in general are moving more and more into powerful positions in education and other occupations and professions, African American women are still a small minority (Alston, 2005). Women are hardly represented in secondary leadership level. It is clear that women are not represented equally in leadership and teaching roles (Shakeshaft, 1990). According to Shakeshaft, women are underrepresented by 19% in the secondary principalship.

Both White and Black women in America have been excluded from the politico-jural domain and from positions of authority and prestige, which have been reserved mainly for white men. Their joint exclusion as women would place them structurally in the same subordinate group, sharing potential common interests, yet due to racism black women have occupied a structural position subordinate to white women in society (Hine, 1993).

African-American Women's History

Perhaps at no other time in this century has a female minority racial group undergone more inhumanness, humiliation, and despair than the American Negro woman. There is more than literary truth in Langston Hughes's poem in which a Negro woman tells her son, "Life for me ain't been no crystal star." (Hine, 1993)

There were no crystal stairs to be found when the Negro woman was forced to this continent under the most bizarre and barbaric conditions by merciless slave traders. It is indeed a miracle that any survived the arduous journey to a new continent shackled together in verminous, reeking ship holders. The Negro woman, like branches torn from a tree, was severed from her past roots and flung into entirely new role as a slave laborer, breeder, concubine, and most important and lasting family matriarch. (Hine, 1990)

The black woman has emerged out of a history of the long journey from Africa to America. She taught her child to be strong, and she learned what it was like to be stronger. She knew what she had to do to survive. (Hine, 1993) She survived the wanton misuse and abuse of her body – raped by white men, forced to conceive babies to increase his economic wealth. She delivered babies so rapidly that her body became old before its time. She somehow survived pain of seeing some of them sold away from her. For those who remained with her, she still lived with the thought her master might sell them anyway. Through it all, the Black woman managed to keep on keeping on. She gave her children love, cooked for them, protected them and told them about life, about slavery, about freedom, about survival, about loving, about pain, about joy, about Africa. (Rose, 1980, p. 10)

Yes, African-American women have their own history. Much of their history is not in a book because their history was thought not to be important. They had no voice, they had no face, and they had no place in the history or literature books. They had to struggle, but so what? They suffered from sexism and racism. They have had to deal with this dilemma from the time that they were on slave ships to now. Although the

African-American woman has made strides, she still remains behind the white male, the black male, and the white female. By the 1970's, African-Americans began entering the professional ranks. Research on women has often ignored women of color, and research on people of color has not focused significantly on women of color (Edson, 1987). Research highlights the underrepresentation of minority women and acknowledges the multiplicative aspects of gender, race, class, and so on, which helps to publicize the problem as well as providing a departure point for research as praxis (Crenshaw, 2000). Historically, Black women have shared with Black men the discrimination and deprivation that characterized their sojourn from slavery to freedom. They have shared with white women some legal prescriptions that have limited their access. Experiences in every area of American life have been in very specific ways different from that of Black males and white females.

In 1833, in Connecticut, Prudence Crandall, a Quaker teacher, was arrested for opening a school for training Black girls to become teachers. Local residents tried to burn down the school and physically harm the teacher and students (Shakeshaft, 1999). In 1851, Myritta Miner faced a similar situation in Washington, D.C., when she opened a school for African-American students. The school was attacked several times. The students and director risked their personal safety to attend, but the school endured for ten years. (Shakeshaft, 1999)

African-American Principals

Women hold 41 percent of principalships, primarily at the elementary school level, and women of color hold 17.4 percent of principalships in elementary schools and 12.5 percent in secondary schools (Doud& Keller, 1998). Fiore (1997) suggested both

women and principals of color were more prevalent in large districts in either central cities or urban fringes.

The percentage of principals of color in public schools increased between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 from 16 percent to 18 percent (NCES, 2000). More principals of color worked in elementary than secondary schools based on the percentage of these schools. Desegregation hurt African-American teachers as well as African-American principals. From many studies, it seems principals of color were more likely to be placed in schools where most of the students look like them.

In a study conducted by Lomotey (1989), three qualities of African-American principals emerged: 1.) commitment to the education of all students, 2.) confidence in the ability of all students to do well, and 3.) compassion for and understanding of all students and the communities in which they live. Many of the African-American principals are well-respected in their communities. They involved their Black community to help them with students. They had no problem openly acknowledging God.

When black women enter educational administration, there are internal and external barriers to overcome (Gregory, 1999). Gregory stated that internal barriers are based on both perceptions of one's capability to work in a leadership role and personal leadership styles. External barriers are described as barriers that an individual has no control over. External barriers might include lack of resources and not being included in collaborative projects.

African-American Woman Principals

Black women did not have real status in teaching professions until the

late 19th century. (Shakeshaft, 1999) A review of the number of women in school administration since 1905 uncovers consistent white male dominance in all positions except in the early days of the elementary school principalships (Shakeshaft, 1989). Many late 19th century national Black female leaders, such as Fannie Jackson Coppin, Lucy Laney, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Fannie Barrier Williams began their careers as Southern elementary school teachers (Amott & Mattaei, 1991).

Whites make up less than one-fourth of the student population in the nation's largest cities; however, 84 percent of teachers are white. Seventy-five percent of teachers are female. In Pre K-12 schools, nationally, 82% of public school principals are white, 11% are black, 5% are Hispanic, and less than 3% are identified as Asian or Native American (Digest of Education Statistics, 2004).

According to Bloom and Korvetz (2001), most principals historically have served in an assistant principal or resource teacher position for a number of years before stepping into the principalship. They learn many skills and acquire a lot of knowledge. They are successful in the principalship, as opposed to assistant principals who move into principalships too soon.

African American woman administrators struggle for recognition, especially in the field of education. The low percentage of women employed in school administration line positions cannot be attributed to a lack of aspiration to be principal or superintendent. With the number of women who have entered and completed educational administration programs since 1980, lack of aspiration is not the problem (Bloom &Erlandson, 2003).

The U.S. Department of Education does not seem to deem gender information in regard to school and district leadership important enough to be systematically and rigorously collected (Bill & Chase, 1993). According to the 1997 U.S. Department of Education, women held 34.5% of public school principalships in 1994. Snyder & Hoffman (2007) reported that in 1999 and 2000, the representation of women in public school principalships had increased to 44%. According to Shakeshaft, women are underrepresented by 19% in the secondary principalship.

Few studies exist on women in secondary principalship roles or as minority leaders. Studying the characteristics of women leaders within and across ethnicities can expand the understanding of leadership and facilitate moving past generalized assumptions. (Shakeshaft, 1999)

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 left many Black men and women who had been serving all Black schools jobless (Toppo, 2004). In 2003-2004, ethnic minorities or persons of color, both men and women combined, represented only 24% of principals of all levels, five percent of which were at the secondary level (Strizek et al., 2006).

There are studies emerging from dissertations focusing on African-American women leaders. The little information that surfaces tells us of their struggle for visibility. Their experiences with family, culture, and spiritual backgrounds influence who they are as leaders (Alston, 2005).

The year is 2012, and the discrimination of women in the work place still happens. Females are still being held in their "place". Women in education still have to take a back seat to men. Women are still being held back, and they are capable of so

much more than the opportunities afforded to them to demonstrate their leadership style provide.

According to Bloom and Erlandson (2003), working as a principal in any large urban school today is both a difficult and a dangerous assignment. Other literature (Case,1997; Loder, 2005) indicates that African-American female principals tend to hold additional maternal qualities within their leadership, which may also be important for African-American communities and schools. Gender adds another layer of complexity for African-American female principals who lead urban, predominantly African- American schools. In addition to racialized role expectations, they also experience gendered role expectations, including the notion of caring, concern and "othermothering" (Case,1997; Loder 2005). Further, even though African-American women principals are viewed as racial insiders, any may view them as outsiders in terms of their gender and leadership abilities (Coleman, 2003; Rusch, 2004). According to Rusch (2004), women administrators experience "glass ceilings, exclusion from district power networks and gender-based role expectations" (2004, p.15). In their commitment to African-America children, African-American female principals may confront racism and sexism from their White and African-American constituents as well as complex and intersecting racialized and gendered role expectations beyond those expected of other administrators.

Research on African-American (AA) Female School Leaders: Theoretical and/or Advocacy Research

African American female superintendents and principals occupied a low percentage of all possible administrative positions in the 20th century, and in the

21st century, the percentage of minority men and women in upper-level positions of leadership are considerably behind White leaders (Alston, 2005). According to the U.S. Census of 1990 and the U.S. Department of Education in 1996, females made up 51% of the population and approximately 65% of the nation's teachers. Women comprised 43% of all principals but only 13.2% of superintendents. African American women represented 10.9% of America's teachers, 12.3% of principals, and only 2.2% of superintendents (p. 675). According to Alston (2005), in 1910, women made up 8.9% of all superintendents, which grew to 10.9% by 1930.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (KS),* 347, U.S. 483 (1954) finding that separate and unequal education was unconstitutional was a step forward in the longstanding segregation issue but resulted in a set-back for African-American teachers and administrators. More than 38,000 African-American teachers and administrators in southern states lost their jobs. Administrative leadership positions were extremely difficult, if not almost impossible, to find (Alston, 2005). McCray (2008) contended that although the purpose of the *Brown* decision was intended to improve racial equality in education, it actually impeded the full integration of African-Americans as principals and teachers. According to McCray et al. (2008), in one southeastern state alone, African-American principal positions dropped from 209 to 3 during a ten-year period.

Tillman (2004), in her research, makes a quest for the status of African American principals 50 years after the landmark case of *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka (KS)* 347 U.S. 483 (1954). According to Tillman (2004), there has been a lack of research in the significance of leadership of African American principals in "pre-K-

12 education both before and after *Brown*" (p. 101), which leaves gaps in terms of an African American perspective. Tillman (2004) points out several reasons why the 1954 *Brown* decision is significant for African Americans in the principalship. One is that prior to the *Brown* era of schooling, teachers, principals, and parents were most influential. Therefore, discussions about the education of African Americans should include roles played by central figures, such as African American principals. Tillman's research discloses that the African American principal as a representative of the Black community was considered the key authority on educational, social, and economic issues and was responsible "for establishing the all-Black school as the cultural symbol of the Black community" (p. 102). Second, the work of African American principals in the post-*Brown* period contributed to the theory and practice of educational leadership. Finally, the *Brown* decision was intended to remedy educational inequities. Unfortunately, the decision resulted in the firing and demotion of thousands of African American principals.

Alston's study spotlights the challenges faced by African-American females and advocates for the determination that has led to their positions and demonstrations of ability in leadership. Success for African-American women in education has been acquired by facing many hardships. Alston contends that this tenacity has not been extensively studied. Accordingly, the author's study analyzed the African-American female's styles of leadership and based that analysis on what was termed "the conceptual framework of tempered radicalism" (Meyerson, 2001, cited in Alston, 2005, p. 677) "and servant leadership" (Alston, 2005, p. 677). Tempered radicals are defined as "individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations and also to

cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization" (p. 677). Alston further explains that tempered radicals espouse aspects of leadership. Theoretically, the work of African-American female superintendents as tempered radicals has provided a better understanding of the hardship of their experiences and strategies they have undertaken to achieve their goals – not only negotiating sexism in society but contending with racism while working for larger social purposes.

The term "servant leadership" did not designate that African-American females saw themselves in the role of servant, but that they wanted to serve as female superintendents by demonstrating a sense of efficacy, dedication to educating children, and practicing survival skills (Alston, 2005). African-American female superintendents made a personal choice to serve and at the same time to lead. There is a relationship to critical race theory in the actions of African-American women who have met these challenges. Civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer, a servant leader, was noted as leading and serving in public education to do something about it, a criterion of CRT, which is to make change and try to make something better. It was said of Hamer that "she did something about it, leaving those she touched forever changed" (L.E. Williams, 1998, p. 159). The leadership evidenced by tempered radicals/servant leaders embodied a spiritual connection, self-will, and determination and exhibited qualities of self-knowledge, humility, and commitment.

Factors including concern for and experiences of African-American female faculty and administrators, such as racism, sexism, campus climate, isolation, promotion, and salary, were the focus of the study by Patitu and Hinton (2003).

According to Patitu and Hinton (2003), research on African-American women faculty and leaders in higher education was difficult to find. The National Center for Education Statistics (2002) indicates that African-American women held, at that time, only "2.5 percent of the 590,937 full-time instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions" (cited in Patitu & Hinton, p. 79). Experiences of African-American women in administrative and leadership roles had a positive impact on African-American students. Data from two recent studies were used for the purpose of exploring experiences of African-American women faculty and administrators.

The question that arose in Patitu and Hinton's (2003) study was to determine if the experiences undergone by African-American women in administrative and leadership roles had actually changed. Racism was considered more of a key factor than sexism. African-American women had to wrestle with issues White women did not. A key factor noted by Patitu and Hinton was that African-American women in hostile environments needed support, particularly at predominately White institutions. Lack of support resulted in sexual harassment, budget constraints that affected salaries, verbal abuse from African-American men, and primarily being "ignored, isolated, and alienated" (p. 83). Despite all of these setbacks, these women survived. Patitu and Hinton concluded that what each African-American woman revealed about her struggles showed the need for African-American women administrators and leaders to have a voice, and not just a place, in higher education.

A study on gender and leadership in higher education was conducted by Madden (2005), which viewed sociocultural leadership situations and gender discrimination and stereotyping by discussing difficulties encountered by women who tried to change the

context of higher education with feminist leadership styles. The author/researcher occupies a position in academic administration. Madden's findings indicate that women had to work harder than men to prove themselves. Gender and status were entwined. Women who attempted to influence men were often considered as being too competent. Women were not given the opportunities to view themselves as leaders and had to show greater competence than men in a similar situation even when a higher position of status had been achieved. Racism and sexism were often fused, and all women, particularly African-American women, were treated as superficial or ignored. According to Madden, women in male-dominated careers often risked failure or other problems simply by being women in a male-dominated environment. Madden noted that African-American women administrators described certain tactics used to cope with ethnic and gender discrimination. They were encouraged to develop a strong sense of their own values and to believe in their abilities. African-American women in academe unanimously talked about forming coalitions and looking for support from other members of their ethnic group. Overall, Madden concluded that women in higher education had to promote structural change, use active survival strategies, and strive for activism and social justice.

Howard-Hamilton (2003) found that applying theoretical constructs that could be considered appropriate in understanding experiences of African-American women were challenging. Reasons for this were that theories were very often general and did not take into consideration multiple identities and roles. Howard-Hamilton found that CRT could be applied to the needs of African-American women in higher education. According to Howard-Hamilton, over the past two centuries, very little has changed for

African-American women in higher education because stereotypes and inequities continue to exist and set up roadblocks when African-American women try to gain educational parity in today's society. One thing that has changed is that within the past two decades, new theories have been created by including the voices of women.

Howard-Hamilton (2003) determined that CRT as applied to education differs from its legal applications. CRT attempts to address race and racism in social science research in addition to challenging the traditional methods, texts, and discourses on "race, gender, and class" (p. 23). CRT uses stories and counter stories based on personal testimonies. Howard-Hamilton contends that survival for African-American women is contingent on their ability to be able to tell about their experiences among people like themselves. Howard-Hamilton further alleged "there [is] no more isolated subgroup in academe than Black women" (p. 26). Making use of a theory-to-practice approach, critical race frameworks allow faculty and staff in higher education to increase the chances for African-American women in career, academic, and professional fields.

Barriers to equality, and particularly the glass ceiling, were the focus of the study by Rowe (2006). Rowe explains that the glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that tends to prevent African American women, and other minorities, from making it to the top in traditionally "Anglo" male institutions, including the field of education. According to Rowe, part of the barrier related to this problem is the so-called "subtle discrimination" that promoted the idea that senior managers wanted people like themselves to succeed them. Rowe noted that a number of U.S. institutions had begun to address this problem of prejudice. For instance, subtle barriers might include African

Americans not being invited to strategy meetings, not asking women to go on field trips, or by placing blame for a problem on someone who was obviously different. Rowe alleged that small inequities, called "Micro-Inequities," were to blame. Such micro-inequities included when a minority person was not introduced, mail always addressed to a male rather than a female technical manager, comments about physical appearance, or slurs about language or customs. These small inequities were allowed to go without correction. According to Rowe, these micro-inequities cause serious damage and are part of the glass ceiling phenomenon within organizations.

Intersectionality: Critical Theory

Kimberle' Crenshaw (1988, 2000) created a feminist sociological theory referred to us intersectionality. The theory suggest and seeks to examine how various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability sexual orientation, and other axes of identify interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality.

Crenshaw (2000) says that intersectionality of race and gender grew out of trying to conceptualize the way the law responded to issues where both race and gender discrimination were involved. What happened was like an accident, a collision. Intersectionality simply came from the idea that if you're standing in the path of multiple forms of exclusion, you are likely to get hit by both. These women are injured but when the race ambulance and gender ambulance arrive at the scene, they see these women of color lying in the intersection and they said, "Well, we can't figure out if this was just race or just sex discrimination and unless they can show us which one it was, we can't help them" (p.#24).

Locally, women are not being placed in administrative jobs because men feel as if only men can do the job. It is the same with specific national jobs. There are certain jobs that women have yet to tap. Women were barred by law from jobs and professions. Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race and gender. Despite all the efforts, inequities remain. Just recently in Oklahoma affirmative action was repealed in Oklahoma. What a setback.

Empirical Studies in Relation to African American (AA) Female School Leaders

The placement of African-American principals and leaders following the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (KS)*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) resulted in a big loss of administrative positions. This problem was the focus of an empirical study conducted by McCray (2007). Critical race theory was the theoretical framework for their research. According to McCray (2007), advances in school desegregation following the first twenty years after *Brown* have essentially been wiped out through court rulings and resulted in changes in placement of African-Americans in school leadership positions. McCray (2007) contends that because of the effect of *Brown* in the first twenty years after the ruling and in today's schools, African-American principals are faced with obstacles in getting positions in predominately White schools. Based on this contention, it is alleged that African-American principals can only be effective as leaders in a school that is predominately Black, whereas White administrators were considered better leaders in more diverse schools.

Participants in the study by McCray (2007) were drawn from secondary school principals in a designated southeastern state. The reason for using secondary schools was that higher central office jobs could result from secondary school positions. Out of

the 402 principals surveyed, 126 responded; 102 principals who headed majority White schools and 24 headed majority Black schools (p. 249). Only six (6percent) of these schools were headed by African-American principals, whereas 46% of the majority African-American schools and 94% of all majority White schools were headed by White principals. Overall, only a total of 28 out of the 126 were African-American principals (p. 250). McCray (2007) concludes that a large disparity exists in the number of African-American principals leading predominately White schools.

McCray (2007) address critical race theory and African-American principal placement in their study. Two of the concepts of CRT were used to address the issue of African-American principal placement. One was the permanence of racism, and the other was Whiteness as property. The issue of the permanence of racism was addressed because the designated southeastern state that was the site of their study had a "history of racism" (p. 250). McCray (2007) further explained that using CRT was "central because it not only analyzed social injustices through a racial prism, but it also sought to remedy those social injustices through progressivism" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, cited in McCray, p. 250).

Part of the concepts of CRT is an activist aspect that establishes a goal to bring change that would implement social issues in addition to addressing the inequality found in educational leadership (McCray, 2007). Racist beliefs and dual school systems have been responsible for the view of African-Americans as second-class leaders and administrators as compared to their White counterparts. McCray et al. found that the placement of African-American candidates in positions of leadership remained "under diversified" and predominately White (p. 253). McCray et al. conclude that the

recruitment of more African-American leaders was needed to address the issue of "how and where African-Americans and minority administrators were placed" (p. 253). It was evident from this study that universities should support preparation programs for leadership and be responsible for encouraging African-American leadership in schools with a heavy enrollment of minority students, where their background and experience would benefit all students.

An empirical study was conducted by Bloom and Erlandson (2003) that focused on African-American women principals in urban schools. African-American women administrators have struggled for recognition and visibility in the field of education. Using an advocacy approach, in-depth interviews were used to elicit the perspectives of participants. Bloom and Erlandson contend that African-Americans have had to deal with the feelings of invisibility, as was stated by Ellison (1952).

> I am an invisible man [woman, child]… I am a man [woman, child] of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids – and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me… because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes. (cited in Bloom &Erlandson, 2003, p. 339).

According to Bloom and Erlandson, principals working in any urban school at the present time have a difficult and even dangerous position. Regardless of these problems, a number of African-American women have chosen to meet that challenge and to seek visibility in the field of education. The theoretical framework for this study is based on a theory that focuses on the acquisition of knowledge that is grounded in the use of language and stories and the proposition that knowledge is gained through social standing. Bloom and Erlandson (2003) found limited results in quantitative research of African-American women principals in education. They further found that urban school

leadership tended to require principals to have an understanding of the effects of poverty and to be acquainted with disparities in school funding, neighborhood unemployment, crime within the school, and other factors such as low parental participation. Despite the fact that African-American women are capable of holding leadership positions, African-American women tended to merge in leadership positions in urban schools that were not supported and had little or no financial help.

Bloom and Erlandson (2003) used a qualitative research method for their study entailing an advocacy approach. The two authors each conducted a different segment of the research. Bloom conducted the interviews, on-site visits, observations, and collected data. Erlandson took on the supportive role by designing and writing the report. Both collaborated on the findings. Narrative storytelling was used as a design. Bloom and Erlandson (2003) explain that their questions became a heuristic device. The use of naturalistic inquiry increased understanding of relevant social phenomena. Participants consisted of three African-American women who had been principals in urban schools. Each of the three participants completed narratives of their professional work experiences. Pseudonyms were used instead of their names. One was a current principal of a large suburban high school and had been in education for 35 years. For nine years, she was an assistant principal in several small high schools until she was named principal of "an inner-city, low-performing high school, where she remained until she was unexpectedly reassigned to a central office position" (p. 349). Later, she became principal of a suburban school in a middle-class district. The second participant was a 61-year-old and had been an administrator for 17 years. She was an assistant principal for ten years, but she was not recommended for the principalship when the

male principal left, and another male was named to fill the position. She left that job, became a high school principal in a large high school, and taught a class at a large university. The last of the three participants had 37 years in education and had retired as a middle-school principal. Her position as principal of a secondary school was unusual during the 1960s. During her tenure, the school showed significant improvement in academic achievement.

Several findings from the results of the three subjects' stories were found to be in common (Bloom &Erlandson, 2003). They proudly told of their successes and failures. Each contended that stereotyping would continue, and each had succeeded when the odds would have indicated failure. Each had strong roots in an African-American church, and each held deep, spiritual beliefs. Bloom and Erlandson concluded that use of narratives reflected self-identity and cultural consciousness. Researchers using methodologies in relation to African-American s should use such studies to interpret the effects of racism and sexism in the development of African-Americans. From these findings, it would appear that the background of and reiteration of true feelings by African-American women in educational leadership become more real and easier to define through the use of narratives in research.

Ortiz (1998) compiled and presented a report on Hispanic female superintendents and their selection for the superintendency. Data were collected from 12 Hispanic female superintendents located throughout a number of southwestern states who differed in their educational and work experiences as well as the type of districts they had led. According to Ortiz, fewer than 1,000 women hold executive leadership positions out of 15,000 school districts, and that only about 25 to 30 of these women are

Hispanic females. In trying to determine how this was possible, Ortiz found that men are more likely to aspire to the position of superintendent than women and that women tend to consider a principalship as the ultimate position. Furthermore, because advancement in educational administration requires a sponsor, women were less likely to have a sponsor. In addition, women's educational and work experiences were lacking in the areas search committees and school board members were apt to focus upon. The search and selection process primarily matches the candidate to the district, which makes the final decision for the superintendent more personal than professional, which gives Hispanic females a remote chance of being selected.

A general rule, as Ortiz points out, is that selecting a superintendent is one of the most important decisions the school board makes. One of the problems associated with these selections is that school boards sometimes use search committees before making a decision. "Search committees pay attention to social class, race, ethnicity, and values" (Johnson, 1996, cited in Ortiz, 1998, p. 4). These committees will consider if the superintendent could become "one of us," or if the presence of the new superintendent will contribute to "feelings of comfort for all" (Ortiz, 1998, p. 4). As opposed to white males being appointed to the superintendency, the appointment of Hispanic females tends to have symbolic and political overtones. Hispanic female appointments are accompanied by skepticism with regard to her abilities and suspicion that she will favor members of her own group over others. Of the twelve Hispanic female superintendents who were the participants in this study, ten were appointed to school districts undergoing a diverse number of problems, such as consolidation, bankruptcy,

demographic changes, and economic changes. Ortiz concluded that search committees often fail to recognize the social and political skills of Hispanic females.

In the 21st century, the principal's role will be different from that of principals of other generations (Blackmore, 1989; Calabrese, 1996; Gorton, 1993). Twenty-first-century principals will face different problems and concerns. These problems will be more complex and involve outside variables (Calabrese, 1996). These problems will require a different way of thinking and a different way of solving problems. Principals will need to examine their decision-making patterns. The changing demographics of students and parents will increase the need for flexibility. The continued restrictions in funding are a paramount concern for principals. The pressure and demands for higher academic performance will require increased need for action. Increased community intolerance for discipline problems in schools will push for principals to develop new and innovative ways to decrease discipline problems (Blackmore, 1989; Calabrese, 1996). Other changes include increased demands of alternative forms of education and increased demands for immediate answers and solutions. Principals will be expected to meet these demands and be expected to solve problems on demand. Principals that can meet community expectations will be recognized as leaders (Calabrese, 1996).

Relevant Studies in Higher Education

The journey of African-American women to higher education has been paved with struggle (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Historically, African-American women were not included in academia. According to Sealey-Ruiz (2007), it was not until Black colleges and universities emerged that any kind of turning point was available to minority women. The focus of Sealey-Ruiz's (2007) study was the response of African-

American adult female college students to a culturally relevant curriculum (CRC). African-American female students enter college with knowledge that is unique to their own place in American society and would like to have the opportunity to apply that knowledge to their studies. Sealey-Ruiz contended that integrating African-American students' own experiences into their learning presented an opportunity for them to take part in their own education.

A part of the conceptual framework of this study is based on culturally relevant curriculum (CRC) with African-American adult learners. CRC incorporates an Afrocentric philosophy that is similar to CRT. Sealey-Ruiz explained that an Afrocentric philosophy values the experiences of African-Americans and "emphasize[s] race as a guiding principle for understanding their status in the United States" (p. 46). Sealey-Ruiz points out that decisions about African-American women take place without their consent, and research and policies that affect their lives have been instituted without their being consulted.

Participants in the Sealey-Ruiz's qualitative study focused on CRC and consisted of 15 African-American female adult learners who were enrolled in a composition class titled "Translating Experience into the Essay (TEE)" (p. 48). According to Sealey-Ruiz, the study focused on how participants responded to a curriculum that "centered on their life experiences and sociohistorical backgrounds" (p. 48). The participants were attending the Harlem, New York, campus of a liberal arts college, and each was at least 25 years old and poor or working class. The college that participants attended was located in an affluent suburb and was mostly attended by White affluent students. Data were collected during weeks four through seventeen of

the semester with each student to hand in three written assignments. Data were analyzed by the use of the constant comparative qualitative method, which investigated complex and sensitive issues (p. 51).

Findings from the study indicate that using a CRC with African-American female adult students greatly enhanced their learning experience and that the participants were culturally bonded. Sealey-Ruiz (2007) concludes that "the curriculum used in this study encouraged the students to explore their culture, history, language and unique status of being a Black woman in America in a way that had been ignored or marginalized for most of their educational lives" (p. 59). There was evidence in this study of a definite comparison to the use of CRT through the subjects' written assignments, which reflected their voice and served as a form of autoethnography.

Herdlein, Cali (2008) undertook a similar qualitative study that focused on the Deans of Women at historically Black colleges and universities. Emphasis, rather than being on students, was focused upon African-American women in administration and the contributions they had made to female students. According to Herdlein (2008), little attention had been paid to these deans and the significant contributions they had made. This brought up the research question of what the mission of these deans was. Herdlein et al. noted that it had been difficult for women in general to be accorded any kind of respect from their male colleagues or for women who served as deans to be considered professionals. A number of barriers existed for these participants, including promotions, levels of compensation, being excluded from particular academic disciplines, sexual harassment, and discrimination.

Participation in Herdlein and colleagues' study was based on a theoretical perspective that used a "constructivist view, linked with hermeneutic phenomenology or the science of interpretation" (p. 293). Over 100 historically Black institutions were surveyed to identify deans who had been known to make significant contributions in working with female students as well as the college itself within the arena of student affairs. A heuristic case study approach was implemented to produce and interpret narrative form from former participants with direct experience of the phenomenon that was under investigation. Herdlein et al. explained that purposeful sampling was used. Following the distribution to the archivists at the Black institutions, telephone calls were made to select appropriate deans and to determine availability. Twenty-three individuals were selected.

Over a period of three years, on-site visits were made to the universities (Herdlein, 2008). Primary sources were made available, and oral testimony was taken by virtue of recorded interviews with participants or retired colleagues who had personal knowledge of the dean's accomplishments. An individual narrative was furnished on each of the selected participants. Each case study was reviewed. Herdlein. found that each of the deans had been committed to development of individual students, and each had been a mentor and leader. Additionally, all had faced obstacles and challenges. The quality of their programs and their leadership had a decided influence on the institutions they served. Herdlein conclude that there was no doubt that these Deans of Women were highly educated and had made significant contributions in the development of African American women.

The Glass Ceiling and Women in School Administration

The North Carolina General Assembly commissioned an Educational Leadership Task Force for the purpose of examining the status of practicing school administrators and preparation programs that were offered by the state's institutions of higher education (Patterson, 1994). Results of their findings were to be compiled and recommendations made "for the development and promotion of new school leaders who would administer reformed schools and school systems" (Patterson, 1994). Regardless of the fact that it is assumed in today's worldview that gender and racial equity issues are no longer a problem, it does not address the reality that women and minorities are faced with impediments in the field of education administration. Hidden barriers and such mistaken assumptions have kept women and minorities from attaining high level administration positions, which has kept the glass ceiling intact (Patterson, 1994). Patterson explains that the "glass ceiling" implies a "penetrable, not impermeable barrier to those on the outside looking in" and has been viewed as a restriction to African-American women, women in general, and minorities of both sexes from gaining higher positions of administration in education.

Unfortunately, women and minorities who are allowed into the world of education administration find themselves relegated to staff positions or supervising their own group, assuming only token roles within the organization (Patterson, 1994). Women and minorities, who demand to be heard, have challenged male domination, particularly of White males. The North Carolina Task Force strongly recommended school leadership that will enhance educational equity and excellence and that schools should be democratic sites where diversity is celebrated (Patterson, 1993).

Autoethnographic Studies of Relevance

Autoethnography is in keeping with the storytelling and narrative research conducted within the tradition of critical race theory, embodying a qualitatively heuristic dimension. Critical race theorists have expressed the idea that in order to appreciate the perspective of a particular contributor, that voice must be understood. Autoethnography involves writing about oneself analytically, which includes personal background, culture, and specific revelations of events and happenings that have had an effect on an individual's ability and right to advance in a chosen career without restriction because of race or ethnicity.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) conducted an empirical study on multicultural women secondary school principals utilizing a qualitative research that collected personal narratives of lived experiences of women leaders from different ethnic backgrounds through their own voices. There are two primary research questions posed by Wrushen and Sherman in their study: "1.) Who are women secondary school principals and 2.) How are they experiencing their leadership roles at the secondary level?" (p. 458). Wrushen and Sherman contend that although women make up at least one-half of secondary teachers, they are in the minority for secondary administrative positions. In order to utilize gender as a valid lens for looking at leadership, it is necessary to draw from women's experience and voice. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) developed a qualitative study based on a sample of women secondary school principals representative of diverse ethnic backgrounds from three eastern areas of the U.S. Personal narratives of lived experience were collected. The final sample consisted of eight women secondary principals who were interviewed in an open-ended format.

"Two of the women [were] African-American, four of the women [were] Caucasian, one of the women [was] Asian, and one of the women [was] Hispanic" (Wrushen& Sherman, 2008, p. 460). At the time of the study, five of the women were high school principals, two were middle school principals, and one was an assistant principal at the middle school level but had previously been a high school principal. Wrushen and Sherman explained that because of the small size of the sample, findings are clearly not representative of all women.

The intent in analyzing data from the interviews was to anticipate similarities and differences (Wrushen& Sherman, 2008). Although these women represented various ethnicities, it was found that their experiences as secondary school principals were more similar than different. All of the subjects indicated both positive and negative background experiences, but a common theme appeared: a desire to reach difficult populations of students, such as high-risk/high-need school environments. Wrushen and Sherman revealed that many of the women indicated frustration of not being heard as women leaders. Three principals discussed how ethnicity had been a factor in their experiences. One principal believed that racial stereotyping stood out over gender. None of the subjects felt comfortable in describing themselves as powerful. Wrushen and Sherman concluded that as women strive to contribute to secondary education, society must assume the responsibility for breaking prevalent strongholds and free secondary women leaders from questioning their own abilities.

A series of interviews and narrative stories of Mexican American female principals in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas formed the basis for a study by Carr (2008). The focus of Carr's (2008) study was the "personal and social challenge of

being Mexican American and female working as a professional educator in a bicultural, male dominated community" (p. 2). According to Carr (2008), enrollment in Texas public schools along the Texas border area are increasing by approximately 16 percent, which is a higher rate than across the rest of the state. The student population in the area is predominately migrant and immigrant and has a high rate of poverty. At least 50 percent of the adults speak very little English. Carr related that "27 percent of school principals are female, and of those only 6.4 percent are minorities" (p. 3). Of this number, three of the women are elementary principals, and three are high school principals.

Participants in Carr's (2008) study consisted of six women who lived most of their lives in the region. One, Laura, an elementary principal, is described as a stylish, attractive woman, born in Mexico City and came to the U.S. with her parents, both of whom hold college degrees. She refers to herself as Mexican American. Anna is the youngest of the six principals, fluently bilingual, and has five siblings, all of whom have college degrees. She is the first principal of a new school in an upper class Mexican American neighborhood. Anna refers to herself as Hispanic. Celia, one of 12 children, spoke of herself as Hispanic. All of her siblings hold college degrees. She is the first principal of a new elementary school in an upper class Mexican American neighborhood. Marla, a second generation Mexican American, came from a poor background. She holds a principalship and is the first female appointed to this position. Serena, is a high school principal and she admits to changing her ethnic identity from Mexican American to Hispanic. Her education and work experience were gained from hard work and traveling outside of the Rio Grande Valley region. Her school has a

number of academic and personnel problems. Barbara, actually an Anglo married to a Mexican American husband for 20 years, was educated in various schools and had lived across the U.S. She is in her first principalship. According to Carr, an understanding of the ethnic and social group identity of these women helps to understand their views.

Carr found from the narrative stories of the subjects that all of the subjects avoided conflict through compromise. Each responded that she had had a mentor and a certain leadership style. All but one had a male principal in a mentoring role. All six stressed collaboration, teamwork, group decision making, respect for others, and tolerance for diversity. Carr concluded that increased emphasis is needed in recruiting minorities and "in the development of teachers and administrators with increased multicultural sensitivity, skills, and appreciation" (p. 28).

Garza (2008) used autoethnography to describe the challenges he encountered as a Latino with the adults, including board members, a few "elitist" parents, and some school employees (p. 164). The main basis of these challenges was predicated on the community's belief that certain children simply could not learn. Garza believed that all children can learn. He found himself in the middle of a conflict from the beginning of his position as superintendent between employees and members of the board. Garza started keeping a journal of the actions of the board, the community, and his personal activities, including his struggle against discrimination in fulfilling his duties as superintendent. This journal was the sole source of data besides his memory of events in the production of his autoethnography in direct relation to educational research. Garza states,

> Superintendents hold the position of greatest administrative authority in a school district. It is a position of power and immense influence. Reciprocal to

> this power is the responsibility and moral obligation to provide equitable opportunities for all students and their parents.

Garza challenged leadership for social justice based on inequities carried out by board members as part of a power structure that continues to perpetuate a system of stratification. School board members will protect their power in order to maintain their influence, and superintendents must negotiate between the needs of the board and the needs of the students.

The study by Pennington (2007) is an interesting reversal of the African American discrimination, which is that of a White administrator in a school of color. Pennington uses autoethnography as a teaching method in working with pre-service teachers (PST) in a predominately Hispanic school. Recognizing that autoethnography is used as a method for qualitative inquiry, Pennington believed that it would help her overcome the context of power within which she was viewed. Based on her own personal experiences as a PST educator, she translated the autoethnographic qualitative research methodology into a method for teaching that would increase the understanding of her students' perspectives along with her own. Pennington stated, "Recognizing our White privilege as a disadvantage was the beginning of finding our footing in the racialized world of the school; the beginning of seeing ourselves as the families and teachers of color might see us" (p. 101). According to Pennington, race is not only skin color but also a social construct, and the true definitions of race or ethnicity disqualify the general view that the color of one's skin is a measure of their race. PSTs were encouraged to write their own autoethnographies, which they shared. Pennington viewed these autoethnographies to understand the participants and the similarities they shared, such as skin color, backgrounds, placement in a school, and community of

color. Using autoethnography to teach and model self-study revealed to Pennington a new area in teaching and how the value of a self-study type of existential orientation to education is transformative.

The stories of three ethnic women school leaders presented by Benham (1997) focused on the professional "self" versus the personal and cultural "self" (p. 283). Benham reveals several themes that appear in all three stories. Benham contends that "an important theme in these women's lives is how each has forged her own identity against mass stereotypes that serve to oppress, and how each has recast the sadness this causes as compassion and commitment toward social justice" (p. 283). Another theme is the focus on marginalization, which inspired each woman to re-draw cultural, geographic, and institutional boundaries. Benham noted three additional themes. The first theme interwoven throughout the stories was that each woman revealed how she perceived her work as a teacher and school leader. The second theme was that each woman "embraces the concept of connectiveness and collective work as a source of power and employs this network to challenge the bureaucracy of schools… that are culturally based (e.g., Latina, Indian, and African-American)" (p. 283). Finally, each story presents a vision of best practices that calls for a responsibility to help correct social injustices in schools. Jolie, an African-American, reveals her understanding of the rigid, mechanical organization of schools that stands in the way of more progressive and caring work. Margaret, born and educated in India before coming to teach in the United States, experienced culture shock on a variety of levels. Her story reveals how she was overlooked in leadership advancement in the district school administration. Catherine, a Cuban American school principal reveals that regardless of her exemplary

record, her professionalism and leadership ability is still questioned by her supervisors. Benham encourages the use of stories and narratives for researchers examining the knowledge and practice of school leaders.

It really does not matter the exemplary skills, the noteworthy leadership ability, and the praiseworthy professionalism of African-American women and minority women. Will we ever measure up? Will we ever be considered equal? Will we still be passed over and overlooked when advancement becomes available? It will only be known through our stories and through our narratives about unfair practices that still exist. We have to be included in America's history. Change has to come or we will have what we have now. For a positive change to occur, there must be beliefs, visions, and models of success that exemplify the highest forms of human potential and that demonstrate abilities to overcome adverse social conditions. (Neumann &Peterson 1997).

Despite gains, women are still not proportionately represented in elementary and secondary levels. Between 1993-1994 and 2003-2004 the percentage of female public school principals increased from 41 percent to 56 percent in elementary schools and from 14 to 26 percent in secondary school. (NCES 2007). There have been changes for women in the areas of leadership and management in public schools. However, what still is true about public education is women hold fewer leadership positions.

Women of color have seen the most advances in educational attainment as women among most racial and ethnic groups. Women of color are receiving degrees at higher rates than men. But women of color continue to have setbacks. In 2010, 30

percent of white women had a college degree higher compared to 21.4 percent of black women and a mere 14.9 percent of Hispanic women. (Kirby, Sophia 2012)

Chapter III

Methods: Autoethnography in Combination with Standard Qualitative Narratives and Storytelling

Narratives help us make meanings. Narratives connect us across differences of race, gender, and class. When stories are told, people become human. Many times, stories help us to reflect on our lives. These stories can be retold, relived, and reinterpreted. Stories provide a vision and direction. Narratives are essential, but it is stories that are powerful. They help us understand who we are. We need narrative, especially stories, to awaken us.

Constructivist leadership comes from narrative and dialogue. For the constructivist, narratives or stories serve at least three functions. First, they create connections. Second, narratives provided structure for what humans think. Third, narratives clarify knowledge. In order to be an effective leader, educators must understand their role and be able to tell stories of the school as a community of learners. (Lambert, 2002)

Leaders create narratives of the self in action. They model self-respect for other professionals in the school as well as for the students. There are stereotypes that have served to exclude women of color from educational leadership. Many women of color were told they were hired to fill a quota. Stories of individuals and community are needed in order to understand where we are headed collectively and to clarify the identity of this community as a whole. Both writing and sharing our stories helps clarify what we know and believe. As constructivism suggests, we reframe and reinterpret our experiences. If we do not tell our stories, they will be buried.

Autoethnography as Personal Experience Defined

Autoethnography is a form of autobiographical writing in which personal experience is interjected with culture and told in narrative form, making use of stories and events revealing emotions and feelings that might not be revealed in an interview or ordinary autobiography. A person may literally bare his or her soul in telling a story that would have more impact than telling a story in shorter form, which would leave out details, somewhat like a condensed, journalistic version of a person's life.

The first publication recognized as an autoethnography was written by Kenyatta (Hughes, 2008). Hughes contends that autoethnography is a relatively new research tool and claims that the term "auto-ethnography" was first used in 1956 by Kenyatta (first President of the independent Kenya) and Leakey, a 20th century archaeologist and anthropologist, at a public lecture in London. Since that time, it has gained in popularity.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) claim that the term "autoethnography" was originated by Hayano in 1979. According to Ellis and Bochner, it seems appropriate now to include under the broad rubric of autoethnography those studies that have been referred to by other similarly situated terms, such as personal narratives… lived experience, critical autobiography… evocative narratives… reflexive ethnography… ethnographic autobiography… autobiographical ethnography, personal sociology . . . [and] anthropology. (pp.739-740). Autoethnography has been further defined by Ellis and Bochner (2000) as "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation" (p. 742).

Chang (2008) defines autoethnography as a combination of cultural analysis and an interpretation with narrative details. Autoethnography makes a connection between the personal and the cultural, which, according to Chang, allows it to transcend an autobiography. A number of labels have been given to autoethnography, such as autobiographical ethnography, critical autobiography, ethnographic short stories, and first-person accounts. Chang further explains that the use of autoethnography is not entirely about self-focus but is about searching for the understanding of others through oneself. According to Chang, these personal experiences can be used as primary data and have been found to be a useful tool in research.

Autoethnography as Qualitative Research

Composition studies have adapted ethnographic practices to form a new research methodology in autoethnography (Reda, 2007). In defining the interpretation of cultures, Reda (2007) claims that an exploration of an interpretation "a profound faith in the researcher, in the process of inquiry systematized by ethnographic methodology, and in knowledge itself: that a researcher can, in fact, find the 'heart' of a culture and re-present it in language" (p. 177). According to Reda (2007), autoethnography grows out of this methodology and is a study of a culture through an individual's self-study. Reda (2007) believes that ethnographic methodology has proved fruitful for composition studies and education research as well as the influences of culture upon a writer. Autoethnographic methodology can help provide valuable academic knowledge on sensitive topics.

Wall (2006) contends that "autoethnography is an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or

her experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon" (p. 1). It is linked to voice in social research. According to Wall (2006), much social science research has been quantitative, experimental, and understood by a select few, whereas researchers who use qualitative research methods are often asked to defend their research as valid science. Wall (2006) alleges that this is changing. The postmodern era has made it possible for critical theories to make use of academic inquiry and expand the range of research strategies. Emancipatory theories, such as those associated with race and class, have opened the door to autoethnography. According to Wall (2006), as a qualitative researcher, autoethnography holds symbolic and emancipatory promise.

The term autoethnography has been in use for more than 20 years. It builds on a familiar qualitative research term while introducing a new way of pursuing social knowledge. Moustakas (1990) "labeled the method heuristic inquiry" (cited in Wall, 2006, p. 4). Those who support autobiographical inquiry have argued that autoethnography is more authentic than traditional research approaches because the researcher's use of self, the voice of the insider, is more likely to be true than that of the outsider (Wall, 2006). Wall (2006) concludes that autoethnography as a research method is part of but delineated from autobiography, and the self can be used in methodological research.

Autoethnography, as qualitative research method (Chang, 2008), is not just a study of oneself alone. According to Philaretou and Allen (2006), the autoethnographic mode of inquiry is rooted in the qualitative tradition of field research methodology. Other subjects can be included as informants in the study. The author and researcher of

such a study should concentrate on personal memory, self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-analysis in relation to the topic of study. Chang (2008) asserts that collecting external data could include ethnographic interviews or allow the subject to write a narrative story that would incorporate the concepts of self, including culture, self-evaluation, and interpretation in order to provide an analysis of the story as it relates to a given research topic and question.

Philaretou and Allen (2006) further contend that autoethnographic methods are useful for studying sensitive topics because the researcher as subject can provide insider knowledge not accessible from mainstream research methods whereby subjects might be hesitant to reveal personal information. As in all research methods, the issues of credibility and trustworthiness (as opposed to validity and reliability) are important in qualitative autoethnographic research because they rely on the accuracy of the autoethnographer's recollections to reconstruct events. "Mixing and matching various research methodologies – for example, utilizing both mainstream qualitative and quantitative methods in conjunction with autoethnographic accounts – can help strengthen research findings as each method provides its unique contribution" (Philaretou & Allen, 2006, p. 73). Philaretou and Allen (2006) point out that some qualitative researchers criticize autoethnography as being limited in promoting social change and allowing biases in research endeavors.

Educational Research Purposes

Hughes (2008) addresses the connection of autoethnography to research in education, and proposes five key decisions of what she terms a "good enough method" (p. 125) and how this approach can be applied to expose and address "educator biases

relating to the matrix of race, class, and gender" (p. 125). Hughes (2008) describes three *bridges* (p. 127) connecting autoethnography research in education and reflexivity in teaching and learning. First, autoethnography teaches one about the self and how it forces an individual to be more self-reflexive. Second, it teaches an individual to share emotions with audiences. Third, autoethnography teaches an individual to use self-critical attitudes by offering self-disclosure. Hughes (2008) claims that he has used his own Black, male, and working poor background to show how his relationships, identifications, and exchanges are related to "the disproportionately large volume of self-identified White, middle class female graduate student-practitioners with whom [he] studies, teaches, and learns" (p. 128). Hughes (2008) explains what he calls the "good enough methods" (p. 140) for autoethnography:

1) accepting and appropriating subjectivity in one's own experience rather than feeling compelled to hide it or to quantify it,
2) dealing with the emotional difficulty of writing against the self,
3) finding and confronting one's own authentic voice, and
4) coping with the vulnerability of revealing your old self and new-self narratives (p. 140).

Autoethnography is a relatively new research tool in education (Hughes, 2008). According to Hughes (2008), the research genre of autoethnography appears to be gaining particular credibility and influence in education, communication studies, and qualitative research. Hughes (2008) contends that "it is intended to ask questions like 'How might my experiences of race' and 'class' offer insights about my ability to address these issues in any given educational event/situation?" (p. 77). One of the key

factors pointed out by Hughes (2008) is that authors considering autoethnographic techniques should do so precisely because of the "qualitative genre's capacity to engage first person voice and to embrace the conflict of writing against oneself as he or she finds himself/herself entrenched in the complications of their positions" (p. 77). Autoethnography includes dramatic recall to invite the reader to relive events with the author. Hughes (2008) discusses two autoethnographic accounts in support of his beliefs in autoethnography: one his own, an African American male professor, and the other a White urban school teacher, who had once been a student of Hughes.

As a corollary, organizational autoethnography (Boyle & Parry, 2007) is purported to have a definite contribution to organizational research. There is a connection in the methods used in relation to organizational research and the realm of education as an organization. According to Boyle and Parry (2007), "The introspective and retrospective nature of autoethnography can enhance understanding [about] the link between the individual and the organization very effectively" (p. 185). The same methodological, ethical, and personal challenges that confront organizational autoethnographers confront those in positions of leadership in the field of education. Boyle and Parry (2007) challenge critics of this method and argue that the autoethnographic approach is one that younger researchers may consider an acceptable form of social inquiry. By its very nature, Boyle and Parry (2007) believes that "autoethnography is characterized by personal experience narratives, auto observation, personal ethnography, lived experience, self-ethnography, reflexive ethnography, ethnobiography, emotionalism, experiential texts, and autobiographical ethnography" (p. 186). Based on these premises, Boyle and Parry (2007) assert that ethnography does

not end at the personal because there are reminders throughout the text of the ways in which the individual self-interacts with the organizational and institutional context in which an individual is situated.

Autoethnography is useful as a mechanism for teachers and the promotion of spiritual well-being in teacher research. Long (2008) contends that in the current educational climate teachers are required to move beyond a focus on learning and raise standards to foster creativity and reassert the affective experience. The rationale for Long's premise is in the "empirical research demonstrating that the development of spirituality has a variety of outcomes, including higher school achievement and improved coping ability" (p. 187). Long's focus is to support the idea that the diverse use of narrative to promote learning experiences in the classroom is an important part of the work that teachers carry out in a curriculum that prepares learners to fulfill their potential both in their personal life and in their work. Such a narrative, when shared between the researcher and the participants, can create a new meaning in a social context and lead to mutual understanding and rapport (Long, 2008). Long addresses the spiritual well-being and awareness that she considers essential to good teaching in the curriculum.

Autoethnographies can be a useful tool for generating professional change by allowing the release of emotions that have played a part in a teacher's shaping who s/he is. Autoethnography can be evaluated by asking the following questions: 1) Is the work a substantive contribution?; 2) Does it succeed aesthetically?; 3) Does it demonstrate reflexivity?; 4) Does it have personal impact?; and 5) Is it an adequate expression of a reality? These criteria are useful for those wishing to pursue autoethnographic research

(Long, 2008, p. 190). Long (2008) proposes that one of the most important steps educators can take in addressing spiritual development in learners is to build an environment conducive to learning. Admittedly, spiritual growth cannot be taught openly in secular schools, but the use of autoethnography allows a teacher to explore her own spiritual growth and well-being.

Autoethnographic Data Collection and Analysis

Autoethnography is not just a study of oneself alone. Other subjects can be included as informants in the study. Data collection and analysis in this autoethnography has come from acquiring the stories from a selected sample of other three other African American women in administrative positions and combining those voices with my own story. These stories are analyzed to reveal themes that bear similar and different issues and problems. Philaretou and Allen (2006) claim that "themes and by-themes are derived from such accounts, and they are carefully recorded and analyzed to ensure validity and reliability" (p. 65). These stories may be the result of interviews, or they may be the result of each participant producing her own narrative story. Chang (2008) states, "Data collection, analysis, and interpretation activities often take place concurrently or inform each other in a cyclical process" (p. 120). Analyses are further used to determine the basis of the researcher's claims and warrants and to lay the groundwork for future research.

Atkinson and Delamont (2006) contend the collection of narratives and other forms of biographical or autobiographical [autoethnographic] texts have become a central feature of qualitative research in many social sciences. The authors do, however, caution against the use of autobiographical and ethnographic texts in qualitative

research and data analysis. This is not intended as opposition to their use. Atkinson and Delamont point out that the use of narrative material is a resource for social analysis, and they are based on socially shared conventions. Atkinson and Delamont claim that the influence of women's studies, black studies, and other movements in academic disciplines has led to the growth of narratives. The use of such texts in data collection and analysis does have merit, but they claim that a degree of caution and methodological skepticism should be followed. According to Atkinson and Delamont, qualitative researchers should treat these texts very seriously, and the categories of the 'personal' and 'experience' should be subjected to analytic scrutiny (p. 169). The autobiographical narratives of ethnographers are subject to the same "cultural conventions as are any other of the social actions and performances that they might document" (Atkinson &Delamont, 2006, p. 170).

Autoethnographic data collection is gained from one's present as well as the past (Chang, 2008). Data from external sources, such as other individuals, documents, and literature, provide perspectives and information relative to one's investigation. Incorporating the use of autoethnographies of others with similar experience and conventional interviews are used broadly as a qualitative data collection method in social science research (Chang, 2008). According to Chang, "The interview is not commonly associated with autoethnography because the research method focuses primarily on one's own life, while interviews are usually used to draw out life's experiences from other people" (p. 106). An interview can also be held with a prospective participant in one's research for the purpose of determining if the

individual's lived experiences and meaning making will be essentially similar to one's own.

Conducting Autoethnography

Writing an autoethnography can be a daunting task. It is an intriguing qualitative method whereby one gives voice to personal experience to extend sociological understanding, and I have used it within this study to deconstruct misunderstandings in the treatment of African American female administrators and leaders. Wall (2008) discusses challenges that have to be faced in producing an autoethnographic project. According to Wall (2008), autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on *"auto-* (self), *-ethno-* (the sociocultural connection), and *-graphy* (the application of the research process)" (p. 39). Wall (2008) points out that while some consider a personal narrative to be the same as an autoethnography, others use it as a means of explicitly "linking concepts from the literature to the narrated personal experience" (p. 39). Autoethnography continues to emerge and define itself in the struggle for acceptance. Wall (2008) noted caveats that in writing an autoethnography not to become too defensive of the issue being addressed so that it does not appear as a vendetta but rather a statement of facts as they are recalled. I have made an effort to follow this guidance in the conduct of my research realizing that instances throughout the rendering of data and my conclusions are interspersed with strong emotive tone.

Holt (2003) provides guidance for others who would like to produce evocative writing accounts. Holt (2003) maintains that certain criticisms have been voiced against the use of self. As a general rule in academic writing, the use of self is forbidden, but the genre of autoethnography is based on and designed for the use of self. "Without the

self there could be no autoethnography" (Holt, 2003, p. 13). Another complication for the self as the only data source in autoethnography is that qualitative researchers have been encouraged to consider how personal subjectivity influences the investigative process. Holt (2003) believes that autoethnography in research is justified based on his own experience in which two central issues were approved by a critical audience: "1) The use of verification strategies in autoethnographic studies, and 2) the use of self as the only data source" (p. 9).

The use of first-person narratives has increased among scholars in the last several decades (Erdmans, 2007). Erdmans (2007) contends that narrative methods, including autoethnography, represent a critique of traditional scientific methods that incorporate a duality between the subject and the object and that privilege the academic voice over the everyday voice. Told in first-person singular, narratives depart from most social science. The "I" helps the reader see the "colonizer writing about the colonized, men writing about women, and the ethnic-racial majority writing about the ethnic-racial minority" (Erdmans, 2007, p. 8). Erdmans (2007) points out that when written in the first person, the personal narrative is both a form of autoethnography and a life story. The self is a social form. These factors are explained: I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story (Erdmans, 2007, p. 14).

Based on his understanding of autoethnography, Garza (2008) suggests that writing about and through oneself can be accomplished in a scholarly manner. And

within the context of this claim, he, the author and subject, builds upon his own personal accounts as a superintendent in developing his autoethnography.

Individual identity is sufficiently worthy of research, and an individual's story requires not only legitimation of the text but the method by which it is conveyed (Muncey, 2005). Although not directly related to the field of education, Muncey's discusses the importance of the approaches used in creating an autoethnography. Muncey used photographs from her childhood and of important events. Meaningful artifacts were her second autoethnographic technique. Metaphorically speaking, Muncey (2005) related her garden at different seasons as representative of events (e.g. a garden in winter is colorless, cold, and lacking growth as opposed to summer, when it is colorful, sunny, and prolific). Muncey's (2005) journey was the bringing together of her research in innovative ways.

Incorporating Ethnography of College Administrators

Researchers have characterized autoethnography as a highly evocative and personalized mode of discourse that affects authors and their audiences (Berry, 2006). Berry uses "hermeneutic phenomenology and narrative reflections to consider the complexities of autoethnographic communication and the hope and challenges that such personalized accounts of experience make possible for conversational partners" (p. 1). This can apply not only to one's own autoethnography but also to the autoethnographies of colleagues. Berry states that scholarship is a mediator through which people connect. Differences and similarities between conversation partners prompt a reconsideration of our standpoints and the impact of such disclosure on others and ourselves. "Each conversationalist brings to their communication different experiences and perspectives"

(Berry, 2006, p. 10). Berry contends that examining the ways and implications of using the "evidence of experience" (p. 10) merit future research.

Chang (2008) declares that others personally or conceptually connected to self "are often incorporated in autoethnography, such as colleagues" (p. 65). According to Chang, there are three main methods in which the autoethnographies of others can be incorporated into one's research. The first of these is that one can investigate oneself as the main character and others as supporting actors in one's story. The author is the "main narrator, interpreter, and researcher of his personal experience" (Chang, 2008, p. 65). In the second approach, instead of studying oneself, others with similar experience are included. The third approach is somewhat different in that the researcher uses personal experiences or perspectives to guide the selection of the research topic without centering on the self. Chang explains that "authors do not expose their personal experience explicitly but use their personal connection to the topic as a springboard to their study" (p. 66). The cultural analysis of others, such as colleagues, sheds a light on the author's own life.

Through the use of autoethnography, Campbell, Fenwick, Gibb, Hamdon, and Jamal (2008) each used personal accounts of the entanglements, ambiguities, and conflicts inherent in the research relationships of institutionally marginalized communities. The project arose from a study in which each of the authors was involved in researching the use of immigrant service organizations in academics and, in particular, the sexism combined with racism experienced by women immigrants in exploitive conditions. These authors, all faculty members, were an academic research team established to explore the skills and qualifications required of immigrants before

they were hired by an educational institution. Campbell et al. chose to use autoethnography in revealing the research culture of a university. "As we struggle to make some sense of who, what, and especially how we are in a narrative, autoethnography allows us to situate ourselves in the social and institutional frameworks that contextualize our personal and professional identities" (p. 49).

Study Design

An autoethnographic research approach is the method used in this dissertation. Research in educational leadership can involve the use of qualitative methods that represent an effective approach in conducting research with African American principals. This method allows researchers to conduct in-depth interviews, render or elicit narratives, and conduct document analyses that yield descriptions of African American leaders. Tillman (2004) contends that "the individual and collective knowledge of African Americans is placed at the center of the inquiry" (p. 136) through qualitative investigation. Autoethnography can achieve these investigative goals as well.

Data collection and analysis in this autoethnographic study will involve acquiring life accounts from a selected sample of three African American women in administrative positions and combining those accounts with my own story. The following section includes the detailed investigative plan on how the study was carried out. First, I relate how I planned the study in general terms. Second, I describe the construction of my story, which incorporated artifacts. Third, I describe participant selection and sampling. Fourth, I describe the acquisition and management of

participant data. Finally, I describe the analysis of participant data relative to my autoethnographic account.

Interviews

Participants selected for interviews constituted a purposeful sample. The sample included three African-American women principals who answered open-ended questions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed that flexibility during the interview process enables the researcher to explore contextual information, which provides for an emergent dimension within the process of data collection. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The interviews were scheduled at a time and place acceptable to each participant. The goal of having the participants reconstruct their experiences was reasonably achieved.

There was a series of three separate interviews with each participant. Accordingly (Schuman, 1982), the first interview established the context of the participants' experience. The second allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurred, and the third interview was a reflection on the participants' meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 1998). To accomplish each of the three interviews, I used a ninety-minute format described in Dolbears and Schuman (1982). The interviews were spaced to allow the participant time to think about each interview and specific questions posed within each interview segment. The interviews focused on the stories of the participants.

Before the interviews were conducted, signed consent forms were obtained from the three interviewees. They received a copy of the form they signed. After each participant was recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist.

The participants were allowed to read the transcriptions of their interviews. Because this is an autoethnographic study, I, too, included my responses to the interview protocol.

Transcribed interviews were analyzed by categorizing text on the basis of response to particular protocol questions. Responses across participants were categorized along select themes that emerged as a basis of rendering my own story in light of the confirmatory lived experiences of interviewees.

Chapter IV

My Story

"If anyone should ask a Black woman in America what has been her greatest achievement, her honest answer would be, 'I survived'" (Murray, 1993)

I decided to write about the barriers of African-American women principals. As I read an article by Maenette Benhantitled "Silence and Serenades: The Journey of Three Ethnic Minority Women School Leaders," I knew that there were people who felt the same as I. The article examined the professional stories of three ethnic minority women school leaders. The article talked about the identity of these three ladies. Identity is influenced by gender, race, and history. As I thought about my topic, I started to relate to the article. I wanted to recognize the inequities and struggles faced by minority women in education aspiring for a leadership position.

In the aforementioned article the question posed was: Why has there been so little attention paid to the different stories of school leadership presented by ethnic minority women? Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) stated there are few ethnic minority women in traditional "school leadership" positions, such as superintendent and principal, to study. Additionally, sexist practices in the hiring and selection process has been noted as one reason for limited numbers of females in administration (Alston, 2000).

Conducting this study has been an arduous journey, but as an African-American woman I know that I have a story to tell. I am creating an autoethnographic study. An autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) the personal (auto) in order to understand cultural

experiences (ethno) (Ellis, 2004). Telling stories is an ancient practice, perhaps as old as human history. Imagine a family clan sitting around a fire put on a starry night to listen to family's migration history (Chang, 2008). People are natural storytellers; their stories give coherence and continuity to their existence (Lieklech et al., 1988). Polkinghorne (1998) goes further, arguing that narratives are peoples' identities. The stories people tell shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality as the story is retold and reconstructed throughout that individual life (Nuncy, 2010).

Denzin and Lincoln (1989,1994) state there are field texts. A field text is created by participants and researchers to represent aspects of field experience. There are several methods of creating field text. One is oral history- to ask a person to tell his or her own story in his or her way (Andersen & Jack, 1991). A related method of creating field text is the telling or writing of amity stories. Many people collect photographs, memory boxes and other family artifacts. All of these items help compose family stories. All of these items become triggers to our memories, to recollecting the "little fragments that have no beginning and no end" (O'Brien 1991, p.39).

Another method of field text is through interview (Meshler, 1986). There are also journals, autobiographical writing, letters and conversation. There are internal and existential conditions. The internal is voice. Voice acknowledges something to say. Then there is signature which is closely related to voice. Signature transforms the text into research text (Denzin& Lincoln, 1989,1994).

There are three existential conditions for the writing of this study. They are inquiry, narrative, and audience (writing for others), all taking place in the research text. We might listen to narrative (storytelling) form as what is handed down to us verbally

or the narrative could be rendered in such a form as presented here. Our audience makes a difference as how the material is received, and on this occasion the anticipated audience is both pedestrian and scholarly.

This chapter will share three women schools leaders' stories as well as my own. All three women interviewed are African-American who answered the same questions I posed to each of them. Additionally, I share my story as a teacher, educator, and administrator. These three ladies all shared in meaningful ways, and after I interviewed the three women, I identified some common experiences, challenges, victories, and barriers. As an African-American woman, I know that I have much to tell. These barriers seem to be insurmountable, but I, like Mr. Obama, will attempt.

I will attempt to start at the beginning of my life and come to date. There are pieces of paper all over my house. There are large containers in my closet with my papers. There are large containers in my garage with my papers. I have several notebooks with drafts. I have good and bad memories. I am 63 years old. I am diabetic, post-menopausal, lousy on the computer, ready to retire, and struggling to finish this dissertation. I have tried to get in a quiet place to write. I have so many distractions. My biggest distraction is my memory. I constantly write things down, and I spend another two or three weeks locating the notebooks. I have tried to get organized by putting everything in one place, but that did not work. I am still looking for the piles. Another one of my problems is I cannot leave things lying around. I want them in neat piles.

My research arose from the barriers I experienced in the workplace. This chapter will lead you on a journey similar to guerrilla warfare. For women who aspired to reach administrative levels, the barriers were, at times, combative. Even though we have more

women in secondary administrative positions, most school secondary administrators still remain predominately White, White males mostly.

Basic Training

My basic started on December 13, 1948, in Wurzburg, Germany. Kicking and screaming trying to keep my head above water. I am the oldest of seven. There were two girls and five boys. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. My father was in the military. In the evening, my father worked at a club called Club De Lisa. My parents named me Cheryl, but my parents' friends called me Lisa. Evidently Lisa was catchier than Cheryl because that is what my family called me too.

When I was four years old, my father was stationed back in the states and I was introduced to my grandparents. (My parents, my grandmother, and my grandfather were living but my grandfather could not speak; he had a stroke, and my aunts and my uncle started to teach us the basics.) I say "us" because I had one sister and two brothers. My family taught us basically that God was first, family was second, and education was third.

It was time for me to start school and my father was stationed at his new post, at a different location from where my grandparents lived. My parents decided to let me stay with my grandparents, until they found a home and a school for me. They enrolled me at a Catholic school. Were we Catholic? No, but my parents wanted to make sure I got my basic education. Catholic schools were known for their rigorous curriculum. I had to wear the basic Catholic school uniform: a blue jumper, white blouse, a blue beanie, and black and white oxford shoes. It was boring to wear the same outfit every

day. Then I realized it was not too bad because the nuns wore the same outfits every day, too.

I have several memories about Catholic school. A basic part of Catholic school was to learn the rosary. It was best to do exactly what you were told. I can still recite the rosary because they (the nuns) were the meanest people – at least that is what I believed. There were some good memories. I know how to read well. I know how to recite. I know how to be disciplined. I knew not only discipline at school, but I knew if I was not good at school I would be disciplined at home, as well.

Even though the nuns were stern, even though the head father was stern, even though I had to wear those ugly uniforms, I loved school because what I realized was they cared for me. They hugged me and they told me, others too – I guess- how smart we were. They made me feel special. They taught me about school, and they taught me about our Lord and Savior. These are two of my favorite things.

At five years old, I knew that God died for me. He must have loved me. He let them nail him to a cross for me. How did I know? The nuns told me he was nailed to the cross for my sins. I was not real sure about sin then, I have learned since. Because he died, I had hope. I cannot remember whether the other kids were of different nationalities, but they must have been because I never went to an all-Black school. I know the nuns; Revered Mother and the Father were White.

Reflection

When I reflect on my first few years I realized the importance of family, church, and school. That was when I was 5. I still love those same three things today. I realized that my parents loved me enough to leave me behind to get a great educational

beginning. The nuns actually cared about me. They made me apply myself. There were no excuses. Those nuns hit my knuckles until they bled if I missed a word. Guess what? I did not miss many words. I thought I would not like reading. I love reading, and I love school. In fact, I wanted to be a nun at one time. I realized as I was writing that I had never heard my parents, grandparents, my aunts, or my uncles call me by my given name. I never will because they are all dead.

Next Duty Station

My father was in the Army, so we hardly got to visit our family members. We never met my grandmother and grandfather on my father's side. My father never mentioned them or shared anything about them. He had two brothers. We met one uncle, but he did not keep in contact. The other uncle was dead. We knew the aunts and uncles on my mother's side. They were very much a part of our life. We got to visit in between our stateside stations.

It seemed that each time we moved there was another child added. All of the sudden there were seven of us – two girls, five boys. We were leaving our family to go to Germany for four and a half years. Leaving everybody seemed unfair. My grandfather had a stroke and could not speak and my grandmother's health was not good either. When we said good-bye, it was forever for my grandfather. He died before we returned.

Next Station

After four and a half years, we were on our way home to the great America. Coming to America was a cultural shock. It was the early 60's. I could not wait. I read every Archie and Veronica comic book. Now I got to come home – America and to

those same soda shops – not. You know we do not look like Veronica and Archie; therefore, we do not get to go to the soda shop. We returned from Germany to go to my grandmother's home in Tennessee. Coming to America in the 60's when racism was still so raw was an eye-opener for my entire family. Racism was awful in Jackson, Tennessee. That is where we went when we left Germany. Racism was all around me – in the schools, in the neighborhood, and even in the United States. This was the place I could not wait to come. A place that I love! What a difference a country makes! In Germany we could go anywhere. We could be involved in all activities. We could attend any store and we could sit anywhere we wanted in the movie theater. We really did not know we were Black until we arrived in America. All the rules in America were different. We could not even walk on the same side of the side walk. We could not go to the same schools as Whites. We could not sit anywhere we wanted at the movies. We could not even go to the drugstore. I had waited so long to go to the drugstore and now I was told I could not. When I asked my mother why they did not tell us how bad things were in the United States, she told us she was not aware either.

Reflection

For four and a half years, I could not wait to come to America. Then I could not wait to go back to Germany. We did not know how good we had it. I remember finally getting to go to the drugstore. I had no idea we could not sit at the counter. We had money, we were dressed nicely, and we were polite. That was not enough. I could hear people talking, "Who do those niggers think they are coming in here sitting at this counter? There are no niggers allowed." My sister and I heard these remarks, but stupid us, we just kept sitting there. Then they started chanting "No niggers allowed", "No

niggers allowed." Guess what? We were the niggers and we didn't know it. It seemed like hours, but it was only minutes. It became uncomfortable. We had never been called those names. I took my sister's hand and said, "Let's go."

We left a foreign land to come to another foreign land. I felt like Ruth in the Bible. She was a young Moabite woman who followed her mother-in-law to her home town instead of going to her home. She trusted her mother-in-law as I trusted my parents. (I had no choice). We came to a country that was supposed to treat all people equally. I will learn to live in my foreign land. The challenged – I can tell already – are part of my journey. I am part of God's plan. All I have to do is follow His lead and not try to figure things out. My journey continues…

We left Tennessee finally to come to Oklahoma. We drove from Tennessee. There were nine of us in a station wagon. We drove almost non-stop. We stopped once for all of us to go to the restroom – my mom never got out of the car. We stopped for gas, but we were not allowed to get out. My father did not let us drink anything either. My father drank coffee and chewed gum to stay awake. He drove all the way by himself. My mother could not drive. My father knew we could not use the bathrooms. We thought he was being mean not letting us drink anything or go to the restrooms. Looking back, he was our hero. He protected us as he always did. How times have changed or have they? We can go in places, but are we welcome? If you have the money, you can stay almost anywhere. I wished my dad had witnessed those changes. He died in Korea in 1970 at the age of 44. I have come to acknowledge the injustices of this world. I hope that one day we can come up with new solutions for injustices to all people.

It seemed as if our coming to Oklahoma would be much better than our time spent in Tennessee. We were still somewhat uncomfortable, and continued to think about what we considered the "good old days" in Germany. I do not know the impression the drugstore incident left on my sister, but we never talked about it for years. We did not talk about it because at that point in our lives we still did not understand. Now do we verbalize what puzzles us? I have not ever felt that uncomfortable again. I hope that I never do. Although the event happened years ago, I clearly remember my feelings – the sadness and then the anger. I can remember because it happened to me. This kind of treatment was the last thing we expected. It happened to me!

More Basic Training

After moving to Lawton, I realized I was Black. I never thought about it before. We stayed in an all-Black neighborhood. We had never experienced that before. We had never gone to an all-Black school, so that was an experience. We even started to attend an all-Black church. People treated us differently. I mean Black kids, too. They told us we thought we were better than other kids. They told us our clothes looked different. Well, they probably were since we had just returned from Germany. The Black kids said we acted White – whatever that meant. Why did I feel out of place? I guess it was my sheltered up-bringing. It was a big culture shock for my family to do all-Black anything.

Schools were integrated, and we were bused to several schools to "help" with integration. We lived in the first house in the neighborhood. There was no school in our neighborhood. To integrate the schools, we all went to different schools. I graduated

from a high school close to the post. Two of my brothers and my sister attended a high school on the west side. My last three brothers attended high school on the east side. We all stayed in the same house.

My first years in high school in America were a big disappointment. Was I crazy to think that everyone would treat us nicely because the schools were integrated? I may have imagined this, but my chair was always at the back of the room. I also remember constantly raising my hand but hardly ever being called on. I also realized they had honors classes, but there were hardly any of us Blacks' in the classes. I was smart. Why did I not get put in those classes?

While I was in high school, I was never made to feel a part of the school. There were no Black cheerleaders, no Black prom queens, and no Black presidents of clubs. There were no Black teachers, no Black counselors, no Black coaches, and definitely no Black administrators. If we did not have Black athletes, Blacks would have been invisible in "my school". Of course, we had Black cooks and Black custodians. When we were about to graduate, there were students who gave speeches at different school-closing events. We were told that usually smart kids gave the speeches. Only white students gave the speeches. Does that mean only white kids were smart? Even though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, and even though the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed, and even though Fair Housing Rights of 1968 was passed, we still witnessed *unequal* rights. Can you believe this is *still* happening in America?

Reflection

As much as I would like to forget, I cannot. If I forget, then I would forget the lesson I eventually came to learn. I learned that whatever I got in life would have to be

hard earned. I must concentrate on getting an education. I learned to study hard and work hard because it would pay off. I learned to never be racially blind. I realized then, as I do now, there will always be prejudice. Prejudice doesn't just happen with Black people. I believe it happens at one time or another to all people. All I know is that I don't want to be part of the hate. I never want to make other cultures feel as I do. I do not want to ever forget about White privilege, but most of all I do not want to forget that the color of my skin does not determine who I am.

I remember my mother making all of us bring homework home from school whether we had homework or not. She made us sit at the table for 30 minutes to an hour every day. We had limited television, and we always had to have a book. She made education important to us no matter what.

I learned that the color of my skin did matter no matter what. My mother would always make us snacks while we were studying. She would make us homemade cookies, cupcakes, or cake. We could smell the aroma from outside. This helped us to have pleasant memories even though we had to do homework. I hated doing the work, but I loved coming home. The snacks were good but what I loved was my mom always there waiting for us. I loved it because my mom was always there. My mother, who did not have a college degree, kept us engaged. She constantly told us stories about how education would take us places in this society. My mom and dad sacrificed for us to get a great education. They told us we could be anything we wanted, but we needed a good education. I believed them because my parents were not liars.

Still in the Trenches

I started college at a large university. This was my first time away from home. Freedom---I don't have five brothers and a sister following me. You guessed it. I majored in partying. I did not do well, because I wasn't concentrating on school.
I had classes like physical geography and history from 1865, speed reading, consumer economics, college algebra, English composition, etc. Since my parents were struggling to send me to college, I had to do well or come home. After my first year was over, I was on academic probation. My parents told me they would not pay for my college. That means if I wanted to attend college I would have to pay for school myself. My classes were hard—I thought.

I took an English novel class. We had to read five novels in one semester. They were *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding, *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austin, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, *Withering Heights* by Emily Bronte and *Tristan Shandy* by Laurence Sterne. None of these were small reads. I had kinesiology, chemistry, speech, human geography and an economics class. I thought I was about to die. I was working a full time job. Every day it felt as if I had an elephant sitting in my chest---but I finished that year. I had two more years to finish but I knew I could.

Reflection:

As I looked back at this struggle, I had told my mom to put my diploma in my casket if I did not live. Thank goodness---God showed me favor!

Preparing for the Battle

Several years later, I graduated from college. I was the first in my immediate family to graduate. My mother was proud of me. I would work extremely hard to prove that all the advanced educational training would pay off. The best place to test my skills would be in my hometown. I knew many people there (and there is here, where I am) and many people knew me. I was not letting anything stop me.

College was hard for me to finish. I got married before I finished college. My husband was drafted in the United States Army. I had a baby just before he left. My daughter was born in December, and my husband left for basic in May. Even though he had a degree, he did not want to be an officer. Imagine how little my PFC husband made. I moved with his parents for a while.

I would have to get up early to take my father to the post because I did not have a car. Then I would come back and get ready for class. It was not too bad, but my father got orders to Korea. I not only was going to school, but I also got a job working at the telephone company. My regular shift was 3-11. I went to class from 7:30 – 12:30. My schedule was tight. I had to check with my mom. I was the oldest of seven and my mom could not drive. I ran errands before I went to work. That did not give me much time with my baby. Then the bottom fell out.

I remember being at home when the doorbell rang. I went to the door and there stood two men in uniform. I fell to my knees. My mom was yelling, "Who is at the door?" I do not think that I answered. My mother came to the door. She saw the two men and quietly said, "Come in." We knew the news was not going to be pleasant. Then they handed my mother the letter. Oh My God – Oh My God. What will I do? My father

had died of a brain hemorrhage in Korea. He was only 44. He would never witness the sacrifice he made for me to go to college. I can still hear my mother hollering. The men were telling her how sorry they were. I composed myself, somewhat and walked them to the door. That was one of the worst days of my life. I don't remember too much more of that day. My dad was dead. Did you hear me? My dad was dead. All these boys at home, my mother could not drive, my mother had never worked, how would we survive?

Reflection

It was when I reflected back on my college days that I knew. I had to not just finish but finish well. My parents had such confidence in me. Of course they continued to help me even though I had a husband. There was no way I would disappoint them. Now I have armed myself with some survival tactics. I prepared for the battle. I got a good education. I got to meet other cultures outside my own. I was educated by them, but yet I was not loved by them. I was preparing myself for the battle- so I thought. I have seen changes I never expected in my life. And I would like to see a continuation of the growth of this kind of humanity, continuation to point where it is not race that counts, but where ability and character are the only measure of a man's dignity (Wright, 1952).

The Battle Begins

I did my student teaching at two junior high schools. The last school was supposed to be my big break. My coordinating teacher told me she was leaving. She encouraged me to apply for her job. I went to talk to the principal. He told me I would be his first consideration. Toward the end of the semester, the principal called me in his

office. I was really nervous. He interviewed me on the spot. He asked me did I want the job. Was he crazy? Of course, I wanted the job. He sent me to human resources to fill out my paperwork.

I went to my regular shift at the telephone company. I told my supervisor that I was giving her two weeks' notice. I was on cloud nine. No more night shifts 11 – 7, no more 3 – 11 shifts, no more split shift 7 – 11 6 – 10, no more operator 132. That was my operator number. I would not have to work anymore holidays. I would be off during the summer. I would have time with my daughter. My mother and father were right. My education had paid off. I was getting a better job. Glory Hallelujah! God has heard my cry. Well, I was adding up how much I would make. I was writing down all my benefits. I was really smiling. I had a new job. Thank you, Jesus! It happened. Just when I thought I had it made the principal calls me to his office, again.

He said, "Sit down, Mrs. Monts. I need to discuss something with you." His face was solemn and his voice was serious. I said, "Yes, sir. What is wrong?" He could not look at me. I did not get it because I did not look too bad. Anyway he said, "I have some bad news. I am sorry, but I am offering the job to someone else. I am really sorry." How in the heck could he be sorry? He made the decision. He said, "One of my friend's daughters needs a job. He called and asked for a favor." What is wrong with him? Does he not care that I quit my other job. That I have a baby – that my husband is a PFC in the Army? Does he not care about me? Heck no!! Guess what? The heifer took the job and left at the end of the semester. "Good for them (our school system) – those sorry suckers got what they deserve." I lived right (here) in the city, and they chose an out-of-towner who had no allegiance to our school system or town.

Reflection

I know that people who take advantage of others just demean themselves. They deserve our pity not our anger. It took me a while to move on. I was so angry. I felt that it was an ambush. I was safe and waiting on my post. When I was not looking, I was ambushed by the principal, by the senator's daughter, and by the personnel director. Why me? Didn't they know I was willing and ready to do a fantastic job? I was so angry. This is what happens when the system fails.

Land Mines

I had to swallow my pride and grovel for my job back at the telephone company. I worked for one more year. You guessed it. I got another call. Finally this was my break. I interviewed. I knew this job was mine. I said everything the principal wanted to hear.

It was the most exciting thing that happened to me. The principal wanted to know if I was a strong disciplinarian. I said that I had to be. I have five brothers and a sister and I am the oldest. He wanted to know about my work ethic. I told him that I had five years perfect attendance at my former job. (I was sure this job was mine.) He asked me could if I coach. I told him that I was willing to do anything he wanted. I got the job!

Reflection

I loved every minute of my job. Looking back I could not figure out why I left my teaching job. It wasn't until after this that the big problems started. After seventeen years, I decided that I wanted to move up to administration. The next step in our district was counselor. I did not want to be a counselor even though I had the credentials. I

really wanted to be a principal. Well, I never had any problems in the classroom. As soon as I decided to move up – it started. You will not believe this. Someone peed in my desk. Someone wrote the "N" word all over my board. I do not mean "nosy". They wrote something about mud flaps. When I called my principal, he said school is about to start. Call a custodian to clean it up. That was it. No compassion – nothing. I felt like the enemy. I did not have on my fatigues or my combat boots, but I was definitely in a war zone. By the way, the students had not come in the building yet. Surely an adult did not do this! They were all educated people – intelligent people not mean and calculating – not prejudiced. After all, this was 1989. America had changed, right?

Sabotage

I was told I had to be a counselor if I wanted to be a principal – so I applied. I had applied for a counseling job more times than I can remember. Finally I got a counseling job. Still I was determined to get a principal's job. I was playing the game. That is how you get to the top. I worked as a counselor for 5 years – much longer than I wanted. Then the district opened some deans-of-student jobs. This was one step before assistant principal. I applied and applied. There were no women placed in those jobs. I wanted to know why there were no women as deans, and why there were no women on the interviewing team. Whoops! Did I go too far? I was told that someone heard one of the top administrators say, "A woman cannot handle the job." Also it was very evident that some felt that way because we could not get an interview. Another female counselor and I filed against our district. This is when the barriers started. We were sent on interviews. They were unbelievable. I interviewed with seven white men and me. No, I did not get the job. It was a hunt, and I was the hunted. Then I interviewed with

one white man administrator who reeked of alcohol. He did not ask me any questions. He said, "I know what you can do." Again I did not get the job. I was told by a reliable source why I was not getting jobs. He used to be a board member. He said every time my name came up for a promotion, and it came up a lot, the superintendent said "no". Why, I do not know. I had never talked to him – I still have not. He blocked my blessing.

Believe it or not, I finally got a job. I felt like George and Louise Jefferson. I was moving on up to the east side. By the grace of God, I got an assistant principal's job. I remained in that position for five years. I was held captive. It was a set up. I walked right into the trap. The person I replaced had done everything for 20 years. I do mean everything. I was hired to be the curriculum principal. Not even the principal knew what to do – no one in the building knew what to do. I did secretarial work; I typed transcripts; I enrolled students; I stamped books; I made schedules; and I disciplined students. You name it – I did it. I was not supposed to be successful. I was at the school from seven to seven every night for the first year. I pretended it was easy, but I cried because it was so tiring and the work was grueling. Looking back, I am thinking about how crazy I was. I had to be crazy. Who in their right mind would want this unappreciative job? No one got to see my game face. I came to work happy every day. You never let the enemy see you sweat. They were the enemy, and I packed my own chute.

Leadership is generally associated with an individual being in position of authority and holding a certain measure of power and influence within an organization. However African-American women in predominately White organizations, as a result

of race, gender and social class, may experience a restriction of leadership power and influence over others. Whites often use their privilege to circumvent, diminish, overrule, and control the workplace (Dietch et al. 2003). Even African-Americans in positions of leadership are subject to having their authority undermined (Byrd &Marilyn, 2003).

Reflection

Hard work never bothered me. All my life I have been an overachiever. We African-American women administrators are constantly seeking advancement but stopped in our tracks. We are up for the challenge, but not given the opportunity. All women experience barriers. When Black women enter educational administration there are internal and external barriers to overcome. Gregory (1999) stated that internal barriers are the capability to work in a leadership role and personal leadership styles. External barriers are described as barriers that an individual has no control over. External barriers might include a lack of resources and not being included in collaborative projects. Also, many black women have reported feelings of isolation (Gregory, 1999). The faces of secondary administrators do not look like me. The only time we seem to be able to ascend, in my opinion, are at schools that are not doing well.

I cannot change my face color, so how do I get to be treated equally? I just want a fair chance. I do not want special treatment. You know what? I do not have to worry because there is "white privilege and that does not include me." Will things ever change? Will I live to witness some of the changes? Heck no – not only heck no, but H_ _ _ no!

I trained two principals after the principal who hired me took a sabbatical to work on her doctorate. Then my turn finally came but the barriers started before I was awarded the position. When the second principal was hired, I applied. We were interviewed by a secretary, a parent, a teacher, and an administrator. The position was given to this principal who was fired from another school district two years ago. The principal who hired me as her assistant recommended him over me. Of course, they are both White. Again White privilege lifts its ugly head.

Now it is my turn to be the principal. WOW! I finally made it. So they let me think, I was like a little kid in a candy store. I loved every minute. I know white skin color relegates Americans into a privilege class; Black skin color determines African-Americans' status. Whites covered by their whiteness, move fluidly through society and are unaffected by racist policies and laws, Whites possess an individualistic orientation. Blacks, on the other hand, usually see themselves as part of a larger, defined color group and possess a collective orientation. (Bloom & Erlandson, 1993).

I worked on making this school, the school where I was the principal, a family. I came in an hour and a half early every morning. I prayed with the cooks, the custodians, the secretary and any teachers who were in the building early. I prayed for my students. Then I prayed for a smooth day. I put God first. He guarded that building. Well, now more barriers everywhere. I had superior ideas but I could not implement them. I would get a phone call wanting to know who gave me permission. I never was allowed to make a decision (no autonomy for me). The school ran smoothly. Our test scores were good, our discipline was good, and our morale was good. Parents complained some because they felt I was too strict, but it was a safe environment. At one point the school

underwent a transition from high school to middle school. At that time I was only in my fourth year. The superintendent told us he would be moving some people. The first school to go from junior high to middle school would be the school where I was the principal. The superintendent came and talked to our faculty. He told them how some of our staff would move to the high school. The ninth graders would move to high school and the middle school would have only sixth and seven grades the first year. With all the changes coming, my faculty wanted to make sure I would not be moved. He told the faculty several times that I would not be moved. That turned out to be a bunch of bull. My combat boots were walking in all the bull_ _ _ _. A few days before school was out for the year, he called me into his office and told me I was being moved.

Not only did I get moved but our great white masa' moved all the African-American secondary principals both high school and junior high. He moved us because he could. That was his statement. He was an administrative bully. Again "White privilege" reins.

Reflection

As I look back at my administrative career. I realize how it has been an arduous task for no reward. I have been humiliated my entire administrative career. I felt like Hester Prynne from *The Scarlet Letter.* They forced Prynne to wear the letter "A" across her chest. I don't have a letter sewn on my chest, but I feel like an outcast because it seems no matter how hard I have worked it is recognized but for no reward – no promotion. My letter is U for unappreciated/unnoticed.

Whites are not functioning as well as we Blacks in our schools, and because of "White privilege", they are promoted. White males in education seem to get all the

breaks. Really white males everywhere get all the breaks. It is amazing how America has really not changed much. Ask Mr. Obama. Only in America can a white man call our Black president a liar and get away with it.

I am not bitter. I am not angry. I am just disappointed because all I wanted to do was come to the fair practices in America. Is that not funny? We African-American women are decimated because we are constantly being ignored. I, like Ralph Ellison (1952), feel as if I am invisible.

One reason I wanted to tell my story was to help make others know our system is broken. I want us to try to make a system that is more just and fair. As I started this journey I talked to as many African-American teachers and African-American administrators as would talk to me. Many were afraid to talk for fear of their jobs. Finally I found three administrators to share their story.

Last Duty Station

Now I am at my new job. I was transferred with no warning. Being an administrator we take that risk. I was taken from a principal's job and given a director's job. It seems as if it was a promotion, but I got a few dollars more. It took me away from students. I was assigned over 20-25 people. They were all White. I came in as their new boss. Go figure!

Then the saga begins. When I got to my new building, the former director was still there. I had moved out of my school building because the new principal at my old building had moved into my old office. I had no office for two weeks. I went to the library downtown every day to have a place to perch. Finally I met with the former

director. She was vague about my duties. After she left, I needed to understand the program. My White secretaries were not accommodating – no one was at first.

There were night classes at three or four different places. The first week I took over, seven or eight teachers at different locations quit. They were all White! I had to not only find teachers but two of the administrators quit as well. They were White! What a dilemma! I finally got that settled. Then my secretary for adult education stated she would be retiring in December (she is White). She had been with the program for over 30 years. She knew the program, and I needed her, how dare she retire. I needed her. Where does she get off retiring now! I got teachers hired, and I hired administrators. By trial and error, we made it our first semester. The program also gave the GED test. The White lady who had done the testing for our region for the last 10 years said she had found a new job. I thought to myself, "Come on this is getting old." She would be leaving. Wow! I found someone to fill that position. The state came and evaluated the adult GED program. I wrote exactly what the last director wrote. I change the numbers of people enrolled but I followed exactly what she had done. The two White women who evaluated said the program had done an awful job. I was awarded the job in May and the evaluation came in October. When I asked what changed, their reply was that my program did not do a good job that year.

I also had to work my other job in the building – professional development. It not only included professional development but also a video consortium and a teachers' store. All of this was a sentencing. I felt as if hell was near. I also had several committees that went with this position. Again there was no one to help me and my secretaries' memories seemed to have vanished.

I had to hire a new secretary for adult education. The person hired was interviewed by me, the former secretary, and the professional development secretary. They chose one person, and I chose someone else. The person chosen worked in payroll. We needed someone who could work with the budget. I went with the secretary the other secretaries had chosen. What a mistake!

The first few months we moved smoothly. Teachers and administrators were hired. GED examiner and secretary were hired. I had started to learn the program somewhat. I was told to have classes for our teacher's assistants throughout the district. I not only held classes, but also discovered they needed to be tested as a paraprofessional. The assistants had to travel over 75 miles to test. I decided to visit one of the testing sites; I came back and got the testing started at the district. I convinced the executive administration to let us test here. I was told that I could only do that if after the first 100 tests, the program would be self-sustaining. I got a tester, and I would charge everyone who took the test enough to pay for the test and to pay for the tester. My sister gave the test.

After about six months, my new secretary accused my sister and I of helping the teachers' assistants pass their test. Why would that benefit us? She came in my office and stuck her finger in my face and called me a liar and a cheater. She ran to the superintendent and deputy superintendent. They listened to her. They called my sister and me into the office. They did not allow us to speak much. The deputy superintendent insinuated we helped all the African-Americans pass. Again why would that benefit us? They turned it around to a Black and White issue. I was told that I was no longer over the program even though I created it. My sister could no longer be the tester. My

secretary was not reprimanded at all – "White privilege", works again. I was told the secretary was resigning in two weeks, even though I was over the building, and she was my secretary. She was to stay on one side of the building, and I was to stay on the other side. We were not to communicate. She would be gone in two weeks. She was my secretary, but I could not say anything to her. White in America rules. Is this disbelief? Pretty much like Boehner telling the President of the United States he doesn't know what he's doing. Come on, when does this stop?

Four score and seven years ago…those were the words of Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg address in 1865. That is not true. This is 2012 and it is still not equal. After this incident, the deputy superintendent gave the night school director's job to someone else. Not because it was too much for me, like I stressed two years, and there was no help. Nobody cared. Moving me out of this position did not bother me. My plate was full. By the way, the program was very successful in spite of all the problems. They claimed I was removed from my post to protect me. If they would have checked the records, more African-Americans had to retest. They did not care. They are White and they are right. They let the rest of us know it. The reason a new director was named was because a White director felt she was not being treated fairly. The deputy superintendent moved her. Again it was all about the "White people". I felt like the Lilliputians in *Gulliver Travels*. I surely was not being treated like an officer and a gentleman.

Now I was given more programs with no help, as if I did not have enough to do. The wicked deputy superintendent told me she wanted me to be over the Martin Luther King district program. I quickly told her that I was not interested. I wanted to know why

she asked me. She said “Do you not think a minority should do it?” How racist is that! Only African-Americans have been the directors of the yearly program. Since I am African-American, I fall in that category.

That program and other programs were assigned to me. I have built several great programs in the system – new teachers’ induction program, Rookie Club, Martin Luther King Program, the substitute training, and T.O.Y. (Teacher of the Year); it was still not good enough to move up. Yet with all of these successful programs, I could not get a promotion. The commander and chief of our system does not see me worthy- I guess.

Open Field

I recently interviewed for an executive director’s job over secondary schools. I have a bachelors, masters, counseling certificate, administrative certificate, and many doctoral hours. I have been a classroom teacher, a counselor, a coach, an assistant principal, principal, director of adult education, and director of professional development. I train all people who come into the district. I have many years in this district.

I applied for an executive director’s job and was passed over by a young “White male” who has about 20 years of experience. He cannot come near my experience. When you count who was on the interview panel, this is how it adds up. There were ten White people one mixed person and me. The person chosen was a pre-selection. We all knew two weeks ahead who the selected person would be. The advertisement for job was not sent to everybody. In fact, I found out by accident that the job was available. Most of the time, job openings are open for two weeks. This job was only opened for six days.

This has been my blessed career. It has been a journey. I felt like Moses. I have been in this wilderness for 39 years. Wandering and wandering – hoping – praying and wishing. I can see the Promised Land, but I can't get there even as close as I am. I can retire any time, but I will retire when I want not when the district wants. They will not run me off. Someone is constantly asking when I plan to retire.

This district has not done enough for minorities. I believe that many times the White district personnel are intimidated by many of us African-American women. They let the good 'ole boys system run this district. All the people in the head jobs are White, mostly males. Women are not considered, especially if they are assertive African-American women. I know because I am one of the assertive ones. Our central office has three African-American women. All have position but no power. Only one is in an upper position, and they want her to be a token. Me – I don't get to move up because I am quite outspoken. I want equal rights and equal opportunities. That has not happened, yet, and I am about to retire. One of the African-American women in the head office was moved to a new position after building up the program she supervised. She filed against the district and has not returned. The second African-American woman was just stripped of all her duties. She was our math curriculum executive director. She was given grant-writing for safety equipment and technology. She has a bachelors and masters in mathematics. She knows no technology. The third has an assistant superintendent position with no power. I wouldn't take anything for this journey – That's a lie!

Reflection

This autoethnography articulates my journey. There is a need to explore African-American woman as school leaders. My story and the stories of my colleagues (profiles to follow) affirm the barriers of overt racism. It has been a combat zone with land mines everywhere. I have been blown up several times, but I am still here – by God's grace. I am surprised that my limbs and mind (that is questionable) are still intact. I am constantly on the lookout for the enemy. My mantra now is I am on the battlefield. I understand Rosa Parks, bell hooks, Patricia Collins, and Sojourner Truth and many others. I am tired, but I will not retire my post until I get ready, not when they want me to retire. I have tied a knot on the end of this rope (appropriate instrument) and I am *hanging* on. Beware, this is a combat zone. It is not the Arabian Peninsula, Kosovo, or Afghanistan, but I am convinced this is guerrilla warfare.

Profiles

I obtained consent from the participants, who are presented in the last half of this chapter, to interview them about their life stories. I clearly told them their participation was voluntary. Three consenting participants were assigned pseudonyms as the descriptions and interviews are rendered below. All of the participants signed an IRB- approved consent form (see Appendix A). They agreed to answer protocol questions and allow me to record their answers (see Appendix B). Later I went back to them and asked for them to give me stories to help understand them more (see Appendix C). These women were not chosen randomly. They were handpicked from the school system where I have narrated my own professional experiences. When the topic

of my research was explained to them, they enthusiastically consented to be part of the study.

Participant A

Sophia is a transplant to the city. She is married to an army retiree. She is a sixty-five year old African-American. She has two siblings a male and a female. She is the youngest in her family. All three of her siblings are deceased. She was raised by her grandmother.

She has two children. Both of her children have a masters' degree. She has raised her husband's grandson. In fact, they adopted him. He too has a degree. Now she and her husband have adopted their five-year-old great-grandson. This is her second marriage. She has been married to her present spouse for over twenty-five years.

Sophia attended an all-African-American elementary school, junior high school, and high school. She had not been in a white institution until she took graduate credits.

She has worked all levels of schooling. She started her career in elementary school. Then she moved to junior high school. She was promoted to assistant principal at a high school at two different buildings and later moved to a junior high before she retired. She has a bachelor's and master's degree, an administration degree and a counseling certificate. Before she retired, she received her doctoral degree. Sophia spends much of her time at church. She helps in the kitchen, works with the mission, and she serves on several committees at the church and in the community.

Participant B

Charlene is a sixty-year old African-American who has lived in the city her entire life. She attended elementary at an all-African-American school. Because of

integration, she went to an integrated junior high and high school. Her parents attended all African-American schools. She is the oldest of eight children.

Charlene has a Bachelor's of Science and a Masters in mathematics degrees. She also has a counseling certificate, an administrative certificate, and a superintendent certificate. Her mother and father both have college degrees. Many of her siblings have degrees. She has two sons. One has finished a Technology school and the other son has four years of college.

She has been married for over forty years. Her husband was not in education. He was a police officer. She has taught math for eleven years. She was a junior high counselor for three years. She was an assistant principal for five years and she was a head high school principal for seven and a half years. She has been at the central office for fourteen years.

Much of her time is spent at church. She attends Sunday school, choir, Wednesday Church, regular church, and youth church. She is active in her local church and district. Every summer she and her grandchildren attend their church's national convention. Church has always been important to her. Her grandfather was a Baptist minister. Church for her family was not an option.

Participant C

Ramona is a forty-seven year old African-American woman. She is a transplant to the city. She was born in Louisiana. She and her husband were both army officers. She is the oldest of three. She was brought up by two parents. Her dad had two masters degrees both in education. Her mother had attended college for four years but did not complete her degree. Her youngest brother has his master's degree in education

administration and he is presently working on his doctorate. Her older brother has two associate degrees.

Ramona has been married for over twenty years. She has two boys. One son is a freshman in college, and the other is a sophomore in high school. She has been in the school district for fourteen years. She has been a classroom teacher and a cheerleader sponsor in the high school. Then she was a teacher at the junior high school. She has been an assistant principal at a middle school for eight years. Most recently she was transferred to the high school as an assistant principal. She attended elementary, junior high, and high school at an all-African-American school. She attended an all-African-American college – so did her parents, her brothers, her husband, and now, her son! Her father was a principal and one of her brothers is a principal.

Ramona holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry. She has a master's degree in administration. She finished her doctorate degree in administration recently. She is very much involved with her church. She and her family spend much of their time at their church. They all sing in the choir so every Tuesday they are at choir rehearsal. The boys are a part of the youth church and their parents are two of the sponsors.

Stories

**These stories were recorded and written verbatim.*

Charlene's Stories: Traditional Black Family

Growing up in my hometown we were a traditional Black family. My grandfather was the pastor of our home church, so the grandchildren had to be up standing and morally sound because the community kept a watchful eye on the pastor's family. My community was centered on the church, school and sports. My parents were

the traditional middle income family who believed in the educational system and high academic achievement. My parents told me that in order to be successful; I had to be better than the next person just to get my foot in the door.

During the time of my elementary school years was the time of integration. I attended an all-black elementary school. My teachers "were to die for" because they were so loving and intelligent. The key emphasis was to be the best in everything and no excuses. I loved my third grade teacher because she had a beautiful personality and was so loving and caring. However, I do remember that during this time, a lot of racial issues were all around us. The denial of Blacks to attend Doe Doe Park to swim was confusing to me. My grandfather was a strong leader in the community and would always stand up for what was right. He stood as a proud Black man in the community and would not back down if he felt rights were being violated. My third grade teacher's husband was a friend of my grandfather's, and they worked on a number of community projects together fighting for the rights of Blacks.

Another earlier memory is attending the movies in my community. Blacks could not enter the movie through the front door. I can remember going to the Ritz using an alley entrance. Once inside, the sections were segregated, a side for the whites and a side for Blacks. I would question my father about why we had to sit in the section we were assigned and why we could not sit just anywhere. My father told me that was the law. One day my father and I went to the movie. I was determined this day that I was going to sit on the white side. As my father got into the movie, I left my seat and went and sat on the white side. My father came looking for me and was so upset with me for

not minding him. He explained to me that day, as he had in the past that Blacks were not allowed equality with whites. My questions continued to be, "why not?"

While attending elementary school at an all-Black school, again I would question why we had to use books that were raggedy and falling apart. I would even question the names of former users of the books and wondered who they were. At home my parents always gave us the best of everything including the clothing we wore. We wore name-brand items. Then when I went to school, I had to use a ragged old textbook. Still I could not understand why.

Middle school year were again trying. My mother decided she wanted us to go to a segregated middle school. I cried because I wanted to attend school with my friends. However, my mother felt it would be in our best interests to go to an integrated white middle school because the world was changing and now would be the time for us to get use to the change.

My parents went to the school board to seek a transfer and they were denied. My parents got an attorney and had a hearing with the district to fight the denial. Albert Johnson, a black man, wanted my parents to back down and not ruffle the waters. My mother stood her ground along with my father's support. The transfer was granted.

Attending middle school was a nightmare. Whites did not want Blacks in the school. Fights occurred daily. Once the gym teacher put my baby brother outside with no shoes or shirt because my brother requested to go to the restroom and was denied. My brother went anyway. My father was so furious. He came to the school ready to die for the cause if need be.

In high school, integration was in full swing. Blacks were not allowed to run for an office nor participate in anything other than sports. On a protest one day at school, a Black student set fire to a campaign sign in the main hall of the high school. After that, eventually things started changing slowly. However, Black and Whites were not mingling. All I ever wanted was to graduate and get out of the tense environment.

During my time attending school, I was sent to the office one time. This one time was during my high school career. Stealing occurred a lot during my physical education class. I was asked by my teacher one day if I knew who was doing the stealing, and I said "no." The same day the teacher sent me to the office to visit the principal. I was a nervous wreck and embarrassed. I had never ever been sent to the principal's office in my life. Once inside the office the principal he stated that there was someone stealing items in the gym and he felt that I knew who it was. I replied that I did not know about the stealing. The principal told me that I had until Monday to give him a list of names or I could consider ending my high school education early. I told my parents about the incident and my father said I did not have to give a list. On Monday I went to class as usual. In physical education class my teacher sent me to the office. The principal stated in an accosting manner that he gave me a direct order on Friday, and since I did not have the list of names I was being suspended from school. I called my mother and she told me to sit and wait until they got there. My father and my mother came up to the school. My father and mother had a closed-door conference with the head principal. After their conference ended, my father told me to go to class as he and my mom walked out. One thing that I admired about my dad and mother is that they did not play with the school system when it came to their children. When my dad showed

up, he would always have us find money in one pocket and his pistol in the other. He was willing to die for us.

Racism is Alive

In attending college, racism was confronted. During my first English course, my instructor was determined I was a 'C' student. No matter what I wrote or how I wrote she gave me a 'C'. One of my papers my mother wrote, and the grade was still a 'C'. As a result of constant biases, I changed my major from English to mathematics. I felt that in mathematics 2+2 would always equal 4 and biases could not enter into my grade.

After attending college for 3.5 years I was ready to graduate and my mother convinced me to spend another semester in college to become a certified teacher. I did not want to teach school. However, after a number of interviews teaching became my career. For over 40 years, racism and biases have been seen daily. I now see that it will always be, because if they would crucify Jesus Christ, what will they do to me.

The racism on the classroom side of my career was bad, however the racism on the administrative side was traumatic and an epidemic. The administrative side is devastating as it pertains to racism where one fears for their life. The racism is more open and life threatening. I have seen at the administrative level that individuals will do anything or die to have things their way. Since leaving the classroom, administration has been Nightmare on Elm Street. Since my assignment to the central office, my superintendent has been Freddy Kruger. When he is questioned about anything, his answer to me has always been "because I can".

Tenure as an Administrator

Some of my experiences as a school administrator include the following: I have been forced to name a specific person as a head football coach. If the choice I turned in was not to their liking the decision sheet would disappear, not to be found. I have been forced to name certain assistant principals who were put in place to spy for the district. I was told by one assistant principal he was promised a central office job if he could find evidence on me of misappropriating school funds. I was told by the superintendent to turn over all finances to the assistant principal. After a year, I ended that foolishness and told the district I would no longer continue that practice. The assistant principal told the superintendent, I was squeaky clean.

I was transferred to the central office by the superintendent because a school board member got up in my face at a basketball game and demanded that I remove my student body from the gym because she did not like their chant. When I refused, she told me she would have my job. (The school was losing the inner-city basketball game.) Secondly, the executive director of secondary schools came to me to change the dress code for the prom. A parent came to her to say that I would not approve of the girls wearing the Madonna bra's top and a skirt to the prom. My response was "no", because everything you see on television was not appropriate for a high school prom.

In my newly assigned position I was to replace a white male who had the same position. The white male was an executive director, and I was told to do the same job as a director. Litigation gave me the title of executive director. Other directors were promoted to executive directors with a $2000 raise, except for me. Litigation gave me the raise.

I was reassigned to the food services and moved from the central office to the school district's junkyard. Litigation gave me the curriculum job, and I moved back to the central office. I was given until June 30, 2010 to transition my clients in my Licensed Professional Counseling job, because the school board had passed a policy that said I could not see any student attending the district schools in private practice as an employee of the district. (This is currently being litigated.)

I was assigned as technology grant writer because the school district was in school improvement for math scores. (This assignment is in current litigation because the district is in school improvement because of reading scores.) I was accosted by the superintendent because I asked my supervisor why the math curriculum was pulled from the district website. (Again, this is in current litigation.)

I was not allowed to interview the math coaches when my White female coworker was allowed to interview her reading coaches. Math coaches were hired without my input. (This issue is in current litigation.) Section 504 was reassigned to a white female with the reason, "I failed to provide the leadership the district needed". Four (4) parents filed complaints with the Office of Civil Rights of which two were pertaining to Section 504. To this day I have not seen the ruling from the Office of Civil Rights, but the grapevine has said that I helped the parents win against the school district. (This issue is in current litigation because both parents happened to be black.)

All the curriculum directors and executive directors are on the district school improvement team except this Black face. When I inquired about it, I was reassigned. (This administrative action is being litigated.) Under the current leadership, the superintendent has demoted all blacks in leadership positions. After the filing of

litigation, he silently promoted one Black male and one Black female. He has promoted a female half- Black and half- White. I applied for an assistant superintendent position and the job was given to a White male with less administrative experience and credentials. (This administrative action is being litigated.)

Currently, after forty (40) years working as an educator with this district, I am still in litigation fighting for my civil rights. I am eligible to retire any time I choose but will not until I feel like I have the rights granted to me by the Constitution of the United States. I have the right to go to work daily and not be shunned or become invisible in the eyes of my colleagues. I have the right to come to work and make decisions without biases and racisms anytime I am in the presence of my superintendent. I have a right to sit in a room with my peers and not be afraid to speak because my peers will not attend with listening ears to any suggestions or comments made. I have a right to be a part of the decision making body of this district without being the token number one and only one black person to sit on a committee. I have a right to be free.

Ramona's Stories: Ku Klux Klan

As a child I was taught that my brown skin did not make me an insignificant person. I was told that the world was not fair. Therefore, to be a success in life I had to be ten times better than the white person who was competing with me for a piece of the "American pie". Additionally, because I was born black and female, the world would force me to prove my intelligence and abilities every day of my life.

My parents were concerned with exposing my two brothers and me to all the positive aspects of African-American culture. During summer vacation, my father, who as a history teacher before he became an administrator, took the family to visit

historically important landmarks and museums. I still remember the delight that I experienced when we visited Harpers Ferry, Virginia. My father was an excellent story teller. He knew how to visually and verbally weave the tapestry of memories of the past in such a manner that I travelled through time.

As a result of my parent's passion for exposing their children to the "better things in life", we moved. When I was in junior high school, they up-rooted us from our neighborhood.

I remember that my youngest brother was shooting basketball at our junior high school. While he was improving his game on the court, a man and his son approached him. The man pointed a gun at my youngest brother. The man asked his son to identify my brother as the thief of his son's bicycle. The man's son said that my brother was not the thief. Then, the man and his son left the basketball court. My brother was spared an early death because the gun man's son did not identify him as a bicycle thief.

In another memory, when we were moving to our new home, our neighbor and his wife were having a fist fight in the middle of the street. As the neighbor's wife hit him in the face; we drove out of the old neighborhood to start a new life. While my family left the old neighborhood, I watched the drama through the back window of our Chevrolet super sport.

When we arrived, our new neighborhood could be described as affluent by anyone who was important in my city. As a matter of fact, my family was called "block busters" because Black people did not reside on that side of town in the early 1970s. For the Black people who dared to forget their place in society by moving into White

neighborhoods, the Ku Klux Klan was ready and willing to teach a lifelong lesson of racial persecution.

One day my family returned from grocery shopping. When my brothers entered their bedroom, they noticed that glass from the window was all over the floor. My parents inspected the window and found that the glass had been shattered by a small caliber bullet.

The next night we were awakened from sleep by the sound of cars as well as the lights from vehicle in our front windows. My father ran to get his gun. Then, he opened the patio door and stepped quietly outside.

We were told by our mother to lie down on the floor in the hallway of our home. Then, we heard our father discharging his pistol at the Klan members. Shortly after hearing the gun shots, my father came back to check on our welfare. He said that the Klan members were gone.

When daylight came, my family went shopping. We went and bought two rifles and a .357 magnum pistol. My father ensured that each member of his family was armed with a weapon. Then, we prepared for night fall. When, the Klan came again. They set a cross on fire in our yard. After the cross was lit, the Klan members preceded to drive through our beautiful grass with their vehicles.

However, the Ku Klux Klan members did not know that we were waiting. My father gave us the command to open fire on the vehicles. The Klan members were shocked. They ran and a Volkswagen bug was stuck in the deep trenches that had been created in our well-kept lawn. Therefore, my father ran towards the vehicle and shook it

by lifting it on to one side. Nevertheless, in the heat of the moment with the bullets flying, the owners of the bug had run away.

When the next day presented itself to us, the bug was still in our yard. We waited all day for the Klan members to return for the car. However, they returned that night for the car. With the return of the Klan members, I was preparing to fire my rifle. Then, my father said that we would not shoot the Klan members if they took the car and left us alone.

My family never had any more problems with the Klan members. The Klan is organized and perpetuated by men and women who are cowards. When my family fought, the Klan members ran because we had the right to prosper in America. It was unfortunate that we could not trust the police to dispense justice in our situation.

High School

I dreamed of attending my neighborhood ("perfect") high school. I imagined myself creating life long memories with my childhood friends. My dreams were always of cheerleading, dance team try-outs, social dances, football games, and experiences with my friends from junior high school.

Unfortunately, life is never as satisfying as a dream. In reality, I was not in the school zone to attend my "perfect" school. I was zoned into Booker T. Washington High School.

When my mother attended Booker T. Washington, it was the segregated Black high school in my city. The high school had students who periodically would shoot down the hallway with pistols or shotguns. When I was ready to attend high school, Booker T. was the gangbanger/criminal's school.

It follows that my parents transferred me, so that I attended the "little university" high school where my father taught.Later, in his career my father became an assistant principal. Also, my uncle was the head principal at the "little university".

Luckily my district had a policy that addressed the "minority to majority" transfers of students. Therefore, I could attend the "little university" because there were two thousand, five hundred students on the campus with three hundred of those students who were African American.

At the "little university," I was enrolled in all honors classes. Unfortunately, in my freshman class, I was the only African-American who was in honors' classes. I did not see students with brown skin like mine until I went to my elective classes.

School culture at the "little university" was always tense with respect to racial acceptance. For example, when Roots by Alex Haley was shown on television, several white male students were beaten up because they said that they wanted "bed warmers," which were Black women slaves who shared the White master's bed at night. As an assistant principal during this period of racial unrest my father often found puddles of blood from unreported battles on campus. Another example can be found in the fact that our school's athletes were on the teams together. However, the Black and White athletes did not socialize together off school grounds.

I remember an incident that involved our best sprinter on the track team who was an African-American. He attempted to date a Caucasian-American female who was on the high school dance team. In summary the Black male athlete was beaten without mercy by some of his team mates.

My high school had a Black and White prom as well as Black and White student government officers. Additionally, on the cheerleading and dance teams, there were a set number of Black girls who could join those teams. Frequently, Klan members would show their membership cards to members of the student body for recruitment and fear tactics.

Occasionally, the honor students would load onto the yellow school buses and visit places that could not be explored in our textbooks. Whenever, my classmates loaded the buses, they were very careful not to speak to me or to sit with me on the bus. No matter how crowded the bus was, I never had to share my seat! Sometimes, I noticed that my white teachers would look at me with pity in their eyes. However, my teachers, who I respected, never forced any Caucasian American students to sit with me on the yellow school buses.

In closing, I was raised to believe that internalizing hatred was not healthy as well as dangerous for a Christian's eternal soul. However, the "little university" taught me that ignoring the intentional or unintentional acts of injustice enables racism to spread and prosper. From the "little university," I gained the strength to fight for children who could not defend themselves.

School District

As a veteran who had lived in Oklahoma, I felt that my town would be a great place to live when my husband retired from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. I was impressed with the western beauty of the mountains and plains as well as the indigenous wild life. As a result of my personal experience, my husband chose Oklahoma as home for our sons.

Nevertheless, my city in southwest Oklahoma had a generational demon-racism. As an educator, my goal was to be a life-long learner. Therefore, it was natural progression for me to seek promotions to become an administrator in my local school district. However, when I began to study the demographics of my school district, I was confronted with the hard, cold reality that African-Americans were not promoted at the same rate as Caucasian Americans to administrative positions. After applying for positions for seven years, I was promoted to assistant principal at a middle school.

During the application process that I experienced in my school district, I had to initiate two law suits as a result of violations of my civil rights. For example, I applied for a leadership position and had a principal to make racial comments and gestures during the interview. Also, as I was ostracized by district employees, I was forced to sue the district again for retaliation against me. I was being purposely harassed as a result of my previous law suit.

Now, after sixteen years in the district, I have learned that at least six other African-American women have sued my school district as a result of racism and sexism. Recently, I completed my doctorate degree at a Division I university in education, administration, curriculum and supervision with a specialization in education technology. However, I was not considered a strong enough leader in my district to become a head principal. As a consolation prize, I was promoted to an assistant principal of a high school. I was told by my superintendent that a requirement for a high school principalship was experience as a high school assistant principal. Nevertheless, several high school principals have been promoted right out of the classroom.

Army

Whenever I am asked whether or not there was racism and sexism in the army, I simply say that the U.S. Army is a mirror of American society. Our American founding fathers had racism and sexism in the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, my experience in the Army involved more sexism rather than racism.

The U.S. Army was a male-dominated world that was perpetuated by Army regulations. From the physical training (PT) test requirements to the maternity leave constraints, women were reminded daily that they were not as valuable to the U.S. government as the men were. As an example, the Army PT test involves: running two miles, doing push-ups, and sit-ups. Recently, research has shown the Army that push-ups and sit-ups have caused women soldiers to need hysterectomies in their later years of life. Presently, I am a disabled veteran as a result of the push-ups and sit-ups. Next, after childbirth every soldier who had a regular birth must return to duty with normal weight in four weeks. If a woman has to have a C-section delivery, she would return to work in six weeks with normal weight. As an army officer, I saw female commanders who had to run in front of their companies during "esprit de corps" runs while they were seven months pregnant. In summary, any woman who could not perform during PT was ridiculed. A medical profile that prevented exercise was considered an excuse for laziness non-commissioned or commissioned officers.

Every day, my technical and physical abilities were challenged because I was a woman. My husband, who is a retired Lieutenant Colonel, told me on many occasions that I was a better soldier than he. However, my abilities were not appreciated because

I was a woman. As First Lieutenants, my husband and I ran motor pools that were next door to each other in our signal battalion. My motor pool was more organized and efficient. However, I was never recognized or rewarded for my pursuit of perfection. On the other hand, my husband was praised for using ideas that I gave him which made his motor pool more effective. The army made me mentally and physically strong. I am able to be a leader in any situation with the lessons that I learned as a United States Army Officer who is also a disabled veteran. The Army taught me to encourage myself because our world is not fair.

Sonya's Stories: High School

I attended the school in my neighborhood. I liked it because I could walk to school. It took me about five minutes. I went to an All-Black school. All of my siblings went to the same school. The school was elementary to high school. All my teachers were Black. All my friends were Black.

On the weekends we all went to each other's houses. We had so much fun. The only reason my momma let me go is because she would go to their houses and talk to their parents. It was a community. Everybody knew everybody.

We saw our teachers at our churches, at our games, at all of our activities. All of the administrators knew all of our parents. They made house calls. If you were new to the school they paired you up with someone. No one ever felt like they were not part of the school.

I liked going to the sporting events. In fact, we were very good. Our football team won the state championship against a predominately white school. In baseball, we were good but we did not win a state title. We had cheerleaders, band, and majorettes.

At the white schools, they did not have majorettes. People would come from all over the state to watch our band and our majorettes. In fact, every year we had a parade and the streets would be packed waiting on our band and majorettes.

Even though we had the best bands, the best teams, and – I think – the best teachers, we had to use second hand materials. Our books, our uniforms, our band equipment-all used. The only new things we had were furnished by parents.

There was a place near the school that we could go to eat lunch, play games, and dance. We had thirty to forty-five minutes. It was so much fun to be at school. We were not treated like trash. The teachers were mean, but they cared about us.

I remember an incident that involved my English teacher. The students were unruly. The teacher kept asking the class to get quiet. There were several big boys in my class, but no one tried to help. I stood up and shouted, "Shut up and stop being disrespectful!" Believe it or not – they got quiet. From that day, that teacher and I had a special bond. She did not show me any favoritism. In fact, I thought she would. That did not happen.

For one thing our administrators found out about how the students were acting, and they started calling students out of class. The administrators took the boys out and gave them some spats. The girls were taken out and given spats as well, by a female teacher. Most of the kids did not want their parents to know they had gotten in trouble at school. If they got in trouble at school, they would have gotten in trouble at home. It did not matter, I liked school every day. They really cared about us, and I cared about them. It was easy for me to learn. I loved learning. I loved school. I still do. I believe

that is why I became a teacher. I had a passion for learning. I knew that education would empower me, instead of limiting me, so I was told.

Sometimes when we got out of school at the end of the day we would go downtown. We would especially go, when it was Mardi Gras. That is right, Mardi Gras. Many people did not realize that the Mardi Gras started in Mobile. I want to tell about an incident I remember vividly.

Momma had an appointment with a White doctor downtown. Momma could go to a white doctor because her boss was the vice president of the largest bank in Mobile. He took good care of Momma. When we left the doctor's office we went to watch the parade. The horseman who was White would run us Black people down. There were porches near us and the horseman would run us on the porches. The horsemen were hooded just like the Ku Klux Klan. I will never forget that, never.

When Momma retired, Mrs. Carolyn paid her social security, birthdays, Christmas, etc. Momma wanted to make sure we sent Mrs. Carolyn, Mr. Billy Smith's wife, a thank you card. I put Mrs. Suzie Cue on the return and Momma said, "Why did you do that?" I said, "Why did you say that Momma?" She said, "You can't refer to me as Mrs. Suzie Cue." I realized that Momma knew her place.

The Black Church

Church was very important to most Black people especially older Black people. Momma was no exception. She went to church all day on Sunday. If you lived in her house, you went to church all day as well. I guess the church was Black peoples way of escape. It was like a prison for me, at the time. Because I lived with my grandmother, I was always in church. We not only went to our church, but we went to other people's

church too. We always had a 3:00 o'clock service somewhere. Momma would drag us all with her. We were always at funerals. I guess since Momma was older her friends were dying fast – so I thought. I especially did not want to think about funerals. Then I would have to think about my real mother.

I do not remember much about my mother, but I remember vaguely about when she died. There was a big box in the big room and two lights on each side of the box. People were coming and going. They would look in the box and start crying. I can remember that just before they moved the box Momma was screaming and crying and saying words. I do not remember. I asked who was in the box and why were so many people crying, she said, "Hush child, just hush." She later told me it was my mother.

As I got older, I realized why church was so comforting. I learned how to pray. I sang in the choir. I met with the other young people. It became fun.

Now that I am an adult I work in my church, and I do not see it as a chore. I work in the kitchen which I really enjoy. Our church has a feeding ministry, that reminds me of our old church when I was growing up. I work with our missionary circles, and I attend church regularly.

It is church and my belief in God that has sustained me whenever I do not know what to do. I have a relationship with God and he consoles me.

Church was a gathering place for us Blacks. We used to stay at church all day. Then we would have the biggest dinners. We had fried chicken, fried fish, turkey & dressing, greens, potato salad, cakes, peach cobbler, and homemade ice cream.

School District

My husband was stationed in Oklahoma. After I got to Oklahoma, I decided to do what I love – teach. I taught elementary and helped with the cheerleaders. Later, I moved to the middle school. I taught reading and I was the cheerleader coach. Then I applied for a counseling job. I got that job, so I did counseling and I was over testing. After doing that for years, I applied for an administrative position. I got that job but only after I filed a discrimination suit against the district. I worked at that high school for a few years. I worked hard. I had assumed that hard work pays off. I had assumed that there would be no retaliation about the suit. The barriers started. For no reason at all I was transferred to the high school across town. Again, I held no animosity. I went to the rival school and started to work just as hard as I did at the other high school. Nothing I did was good enough. I am very good on the computer. If the head principal needed something done, I tried to be a team player. I volunteered to do whatever. After a while, my pile was piling up. My stack seemed higher and higher.

I remember one of the principals did not know how to put her discipline in the computer. I was asked to put it in for her. I refused because I was inundated with my own work. I wanted to be a team player, but I just could not do it. After that, things went sour. The other principals felt I was not a team player. None of them offered to put her discipline in the computer. Then one of the male principals started to try to tell me what to do. I told him as nicely as I could that I had a boss but he was not my boss. The next day on hall duty the same principal started screaming at me. I said, "Stop screaming at me." He hollered back. We went back and forth. There were students present. Both of us were suspended. When I came back there was a lot of tension. We were called in the

office. The superintendent told our principal that one of us would be transferred. It was me or a White man. Guess who was moved? It surely was not the White man.

I was moved to a middle school. I stayed there for two years. I finished my doctorate degree. Then I retired. I knew that things were not going to change. I knew it was time for me to let it all go, and I did.

This concludes my story and the stories of my colleagues as they are presented here, but it does not end our stories. Even though they knew as well as I that our leadership skills were questioned unfairly by our superiors, we learned to move on despite the painful issues we encountered. We wore an outer facial expression to cover up the real way we felt. We African-American females have learned to hide our feelings well as not to show it on our faces.

All of us have sued the district. Even though we all have leadership skills and talent, we were given a position to satisfy a lawsuit. Later we were moved in and out of administrative positions to show us who truly had the power.

Chapter V

Emerging Themes

For All My Sisters
What makes me strong?
My heritage
What makes me weak?
My fears
What makes me whole?
My God
What keeps me standing?
My faith
What makes me compassionate?
My selflessness
What makes me honest?
My integrity
What sustains my mind?
My quest for knowledge
What teaches me all lessons?
My mistakes
What lift's my head high?
My pride
What if I can't go on?
Not an option
What makes me victorious?
My courage to climb
What makes me competent?
My confidence
What makes me sensual?
My insatiable essence
What makes me beautiful?
My everything
What makes me a woman?
My heart
Who says I need love?
I do
What empowers me?
My God & Me
Who am I?
I AM AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN!

"Each time a girl opens a book and reads a womanless history, she learns she is worthless."- Myra Pollack Sadker

This study represents a focused inquiry that has adopted the tools and techniques of autoethnogaphy and qualitative interviewing in order to concentrate on my personal memories, self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-analysis. Within this processes I interviewed three African-American female principals (and then included my own responses to the interview protocol as well) (see Appendix C). To develop and substantiate my own autoethnographic analysis, the three purposefully selected participants indicated they had experiences, challenges, victories, and barriers in common. They are all between the ages of forty-seven and sixty-five. Two have their doctoral degree and one is more than half finished with her degree. All three are married and have been for over twenty years. Each has adult children; one participant still has a child in high school. In summary, the participants are all African-American women. I, too, am African-American. One participant has at least fourteen years in education. One has over twenty years and two of us have over thirty years in education. In order for us female African-American administrators to qualify for higher jobs, there was a hidden rule in our district for us for many years. We all had to be a counselor first. As stated earlier, two of the participants have earned their educational doctoral degree. The third participant is half way finished with her pursuit. Two of the participants earned their doctorate degrees from the same university. The third participant is earning her doctorate degree online. All of these women began their careers as teachers. After receiving their masters and credentials, they began to advance. Two of them became counselors before advancing to the principalship. The other woman came straight from the classroom to the principalship. All of them were assistant principals for five years or more. Only one person advanced to the central office; however, it was not by choice.

One of the assistant principals was moved from a middle school to a high school within the pace of one semester. The other was a high school assistant principal and moved to a middle school. She was moved with no training for the middle school level. She stayed three years and has since retired.

There seems to be more women who aspire to move into administrative positions, but they are still at a disadvantage. Women have made strides, but it is at such a slow pace. Even though there are more women in administrative positions, the jobs are still predominately male and predominately White. This is a barrier. It has been and will remain so as long as they, White males, are writers of law and unwritten district codes.

Women have dominated the occupational field of elementary and secondary school teachers. Women still remain the minority in secondary administration at least in our district. Even though women have dominated positions in education, jobs with status and power have not been offered to women in this male-dominated society especially women of color. Although women comprise a majority of the nation's public school teaching force, most school administrators are White males, and at the highest level in public [school] administration (Bell & Chase, 1993). Why is that, I asked myself? The only answer I have is we are too assertive and too aggressive. Many times that is seen as being disrespectful or a troublemaker.

I think women; especially women of color appear to have more challenges. The women's stories reported in Chapter 4, as well as my own story, indicate that we all faced a variety of challenges. Each of the participants felt as administrators they were under the watchful eye of a reconnaissance unit. They have been treated differently

from the White women administrators in the district, and they have been treated horribly because they are assertive.

Each of the participants expressed barriers and problems they encountered. Even though, they are successful administrators, irrespective of not being respected and treated fairly. Did their gender or ethnicity play a large part? Two felt it was their race/ethnicity that was the deterrent; however, one expressed her gender was more of a deterrent than race/ethnicity.

As African-American principals, we are angry because we are left out. We are left out of private gatherings, and we are left out of running our jobs. We are invisible leaders and our superiors refuse to see who we are. We have inaudible voices because they refuse to hear us or listen to us. Listening to the voices of African-American women's lives in leadership may begin to change this stark reality.

We are angry because roadblocks kept us barricaded. Things were working fine as long as we stayed in our place. As soon as each one of us decided we wanted to move up, our lives became hell. We realized the marginalized practices. We realized our Blackness as well as our femininity played a part of our position. We learned that life is not fair; especially when all the major players are White males sprinkled with one or two White females. We as African-American women did not stand a chance in this district unless we played their political game. Guess what? We did not play.

It is evident that race still makes a difference. Race and racism causes problems. For us, it has created barriers. One of the barriers that African-American women encounter in for advancement is race. Even though we African-American women have the same educational background and even though in many instances we African-

Americans have more work experience than our White counterparts, we do not get the same advancement opportunities. One reason is that African-American women are being placed in positions with little or no authority. We do not get to show our managerial skills and leadership abilities because we are placed or transferred to positions that do not lead to advancement.

In my opinion, African-American women must outshine all the other people in key positions. Even though we outshine other applicants, we are given token positions with a title and no power.

African-American women are not as well accepted by White males as White women. In our White male-dominated society, I feel African-American women are not valued. All four of us have encountered barriers our entire administrative career. We have been on the battlefield of discrimination on a daily basis. We have been inundated with barriers. In some respects, we are successful and respected leaders making remarkable strides in the district, yet we African-American women had to struggle to be seen, to be heard, and to be respected in this society, and most recently, form the stories told here, this school district.

Because I am African-American in the field of education, I have not only recognized the barriers but also have experienced these barriers. These barriers have enabled us to have a story. If you've gone through something, your story deserves to be heard.

There has not been very much attention given to stories of minority women. It could be because there are few minority women in school leadership, especially in

secondary education. There is not enough literature informing or assisting African-American women of ways of gaining access to the principalship.

My pursuit to the principalship made me inquisitive. I wanted to know what I as an African-American female had to do to become a building principal. Was my path to the principalship the same as every other applicant? Was it worth me trying to pursue? How long would I have to be an assistant principal before I became a head principal? As I started this study, this was my discovery about the district. The longest an African-American female secondary principal was allowed to be a head principal was 7.5 years. When I compared us to them, they have been head principals for as long as thirty years. The four of us have all been assistant secondary principals. Two of us were head principals and two were assistants. One head principal was allowed 7.5 years as a high school principal and was also moved. Neither had been admonished and neither had low morals or low test scores. Why were we moved - and we all were?As indicated previously, the superintendent's reply was in his biggest bully voice-"Because I can."

My regret in this horrendous journey is that all four of us have experienced the same explicit barriers. They too are aware that these subtle and overt barriers do still exist. With these preliminary reflections in mind, and the detailed thematic representations to follow, I propose that this autoethnographic study has met the following study criteria: 1) the work is a substantive contribution to the field of education; 2) the study succeeds aesthetically; 3) the study demonstrates reflexivity; 4) I have experienced personal impact as a result of the inquiry process; and 5) the study is an adequate expression of a social reality.

Emerging Themes

This study hopefully will illuminate and eradicate some of the unfair practices against women and minorities. First, I studied Critical Race Theory. Then I studied the history of African-American women principals and Black Feminist Thought. And then I studied Autoethnography. Lastly, I wanted to tell about my story as an administrator as well as the stories of my colleagues.

There were several common themes that emerged from this study. One of the themes is spirituality. Another theme is alienation. A third theme is family and a fourth theme is education. The last theme is leadership.

Spirituality

Belief in spirituality has always been important in the African-American community. Even during slavery, their songs and their belief in a higher power kept them. All of the participants and I know our faith has sustained us.

Carmen stated, "If it were not for my faith in God, I could not have made it." My faith sustained me for seven and a half years as the head principal of a high school. I have been the only African-American female high school principal in the city and the first woman principal at this particular school. There were so many barriers. It could only have been God who made sure I could be effective. I also knew how to pray and believe me I did. Not only was I praying but also other people were praying for me too. Every week my pastor and I would discuss issues and afterwards we would have prayer. My pastor understood a lot of the problems in the district. He was a teacher and a counselor for years in this district.

I can relate to Carmen. I know for a fact that God made me the person I am. Every day I would arrive at the school by 6:30 a.m. I prayed with the cooks and custodians. If there were teachers in the building, I prayed with them. Then I prayed over the building, I prayed for the children, and I prayed that I would be fair. My mantra was decent and in order. I prayed that I would always be those two things in everything.

In my present position, I really have to be prayed up. Again I have authority but no power and they (Whites) know it. They go around me to keep from accepting my decisions. They usurp my authority. They go over my head. My decisions are overturned. This constantly happens. Without prayer and my faith, I would probably have quit a long time ago. A person can only be humiliated and belittled for so long. I can honestly say the Lord is my shepherd. He watches over me, and He will only allow so much to happen to me. I trust Him explicitly. I know my Christianity makes me a better person. It kept me from being so bitter with hatred. It helps me to remember the golden rule and treat everybody the way I want to be treated.

Although each of the interviewed administrators faced many barriers, they have expressed that spirituality plays a vital role in how they managed. They all know there is a higher power. They all seek this higher power for guidance.

Alienation

We African-American female principals have not been treated the same. We do not have the same privileges as the other principals. We have felt alienated because there is no one to care for our best interests. When we need to vent, we have no one. There is no one for us to emulate. There was no one to mentor us until this year. There is an African-American superintendent. She has a position but no power. So we really

do not have anyone. Because of our alienation we have become angry; angry because we were left out. We were left out of meetings, left out of decisions, left out of major facility planning, left out of parent meetings, and left out of running our building. Micromanaged, we were invisible leaders with no voices. If we complained, we were considered trouble makers, and further alienated.

Family

Family was another theme that was strong with all of us. All of us received support from our families, especially our mothers. Since women are considered nurturers it makes sense that our mothers were encouragers.

Ramona talked about how her mother came and kept her kids while she was working because her husband was stationed somewhere other than where they were. Carmen said the only reason she went into teaching was because her mother suggested it. Sonya said her grandmother told her, "You have no choice. You have to get an education."

The influence of mothers has been profound. The mothers in the community and the mothers in our churches all took care of all of us African-American girls. Our female teachers were like our mothers. They pushed us and we received their help. They taught their students how to function, how to work hard, how to have pride in themselves, how to gain respect and how being African-American had pride. African-American was not a dirty word.

In the article about teachers, it mentioned why African-Americans enter teaching. Teaching is tending our mothers' gardens. Teaching is a community work. Yes it was not just their mothers but it was other mothers who were very influential.

Those other mothers would tell you – "I know you know better than that. Get your little fast self home; I'm going to call your momma and tell her what you were doing." Don't you ever look like you are going to talk back. Likewise, one of the "community mothers" would say, "I will come off this porch whip you myself and call your momma".

Education

Education was pumped into our heads. We were told over and over without education we were doomed. We especially needed to educate our girls, so they can continue teaching the children. That is why it was so important to Oprah Winfrey. Oprah said, "When you change a girl's life, it's not just that life. You start to affect a family, a community, and a nation" (Internet).

There is no doubt education makes the difference. There were many women who blazed the trail for us. Fanny Jackson Choppon, born a slave, graduated from Oberlin College and became the first African-American woman to become a school principal.

African women have made the difference for us. bell hooks attended school in her early years at an all-Black school. Most of her teachers were African-American women. She said they were committed to making the girls intellects. In the 1960's, bell was transferred to an all-White school. Her teachers were not interested in her at all. bell hooks said, "We soon learned that obedience and not a zealous will to learn was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn she regarded as something that could easily be seen as a threat to white authority" (hooks, 1996).

There were many African-American women educators that helped to build strong foundations for us. Just a few of these women Charlotte Grinke, Lucy Laney, Mary Bethune, Septima Clark, Daisy Bates, Jean Hutson, Marva Collins, and Mary Futrell.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, the NEA president in 1983, summed up what will keep us lifted up. She said, "Don't allow circumstances to hold you back – even negative ones. You don't have to let your circumstances define you. You can define yourself and the best way to find yourself is through education" (Igus, 1997).

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through that a daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a child of a farm worker can become the leader of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we make out of what we have, not what we are given that separates one person from another." (Nelson Internet Source)

Carmen and Ramona's parents either attended college or were graduates. They had good paying jobs. This was a contrast to Sonya. She was raised by a grandmother. Carmen and Ramona's parents had professional jobs. These two had parents who pushed them with aspirations such as their own. Ramona's brothers both went to college and Carmen had several siblings with a college degree. Even though Sonya did not have the advantages of Carmen and Ramona, she met her challenges. She mastered several skills. Not only did she figure out how to survive, she also made sure her children did the same.

There is no doubt that family is important in helping educate children. I can personally relate. When my mother knew how much I wanted to be a teacher, she did

everything to help me get there. She came to my house and cooked dinner and babysat for me. If I needed to go to the library and my husband was working, I could take the kids to my mother. After I received my degree, I knew my children needed to work hard at school. My husband and I were both teachers. We definitely wanted to make sure our children had a better education than we received. My colleagues did the same.

Leadership

There has not been very much attention given to stories of minority women. It could be because there are few minority women in school leadership.

Women in administration face many challenges in their careers and when the additional characteristics of racial and ethnic differences are included the challenges increase. The struggle to achieve fair representation and adequate advancement opportunities within school districts is a problem that disturbs minority women. (Marcano, 1998)

African-American women who hold leadership positions in the educational system face dual burdens of sexism and racism and confront special challenges in promotion and tenure. Race more than gender is the major obstacle to career advancement. (Allen, Jacobson, &Lomotey, 1995).

Leadership is generally associated with an individual in a position of authority and holding a certain measure of power and influence within an organization. However, for African-American women (AAW), in predominately White organizations, race, gender, and social class may restrict the process of leadership. Rather than being mechanisms of leadership, power, and influence, these characteristics - may be a means

of restricting African-American Women's leadership authority over others. (Byrd, 2000)

All three of the administrators in this study, along with myself, have excellent leadership skills. Only one was actually a head principal. When I asked different people in each of their separate buildings about their leadership skills, I was not surprised. All informants expressed how well they were as instructional leaders; however, they were still transferred. Even though they were good instructional leaders, some did not want these African-American women to tell them how to run their classrooms, or anything for that matter. That was true of parents as well.

One of their concerns was committed to making school more equitable for African-American children. Their leadership skills allowed them to run their schools but at the same time make sure everybody got an equitable education.

The participants had good leadership. They were aware who the leaders were in the building. They were aware of and remembered their support staff. They were good listeners. They were good communicators. They were good role models. They knew who their mediocre teachers were and they worked to make them better. They could think outside the box when they were allowed. They were not micromanagers, but they did pay attention to running the school. They all had good communication skills both written and spoken. They never lost sight of the most important thing at the school. It wasn't the mandates, the curriculum, the federal regulations, or the evaluations. It was the needs of the students.

Leadership is a process that occurs within the minds of individual who live in a culture – a process that entails the capacities to create stories, to understand and

evaluate these stories, and to appreciate the struggle among stories. Ultimately certain kinds of stories will typically become predominant – in particular kinds of stories that provide an adequate and timely sense of identity for individuals who live within a community of institution. (Gardner, 1995, p. 22)

Points of Interest

1. Race still matters, but education can be an equalizer
2. Get away from the Black/White dichotomy.
3. We must educate all students not just a particular group about race and culture.
4. When there are cultural activities in the schools, all cultures should be required to attend not just the people of that particular culture.
5. Many of the teachers and administrators have not grown up around other cultures, so they are not familiar with different cultures. That is not an excuse.
6. Teachers need to be fair to everybody.
7. Be aware that education has been denied to populations such as:
    a. Enslaved Africans
    b. People of Latin and Asian descent
    c. Women
    d. Poor Whites
    e. The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas
8. The percentage of minority students should reflect the ratio of minority teachers and administrators.
9. Women make up the majority of teaching jobs and men make up the majority of administration. That must change.

10. Change established schooling practices as exemplified in this study.
11. Continuously re-evaluate the culture of the schools and school system.

Advice for Other African-American Women

1. Do a good job in the role you currently have.
2. Be able to communicate with different kinds of people to build relationships with them.
3. There should be something unique about you.
4. Know how to make people feel comfortable around you.
5. Make yourself presentable. Dress professionally.
6. Have excellent communication skills.
7. Be knowledgeable about your job.
8. Accept other people's opinion.
9. Be a good listener.
10. Do not compromise your standards and principles to get a job.

Advice for School Board Members

1. The board should have a profile describing the kind of person they are searching to fill a position.
2. The board should consider African-American women for higher jobs not because of numbers but because they are the most qualified.
3. Do not reject African-American women because they do not fit the look.
4. Be fair. We do not want special treatment. We just want to be treated fairly. No pre-selections.
5. Continuously re-evaluate the culture of the schools and school system.

6. Ensure fair representation on the interview team.
7. Do not let race, gender, or class be a deterrent.
8. Do not let aggressiveness, outspokenness, strong will, and being non-negotiable a turn-off.
9. Allow leaders their autonomy.
10. White school boards should hire people who look different from them.
11. Create recruitment and selection strategies that are extensive.
12. Address gender and ethnic discrimination in the principal administrator selection.
13. Notice the inequities. Women should be given equal opportunities as men.
14. Be aware of the racist and sexist beliefs being practiced.
15. Examine the school system's hiring and promotion practices and procedures.
16. There must be opportunities to address issues of race and gender.
17. Confront discrimination in the principalship is evident.
18. Notice the gender inequities in the organizational structure of schools.
19. Be aware of the internal and external barriers facing women who aspire to seek administrative positions.
20. Change established practices.
21. Get rid of the good ole' boy system.

Future Research

1. There should be more literature about African-American women.
2. There should be more literature about African-American women principals in secondary education.

3. There should be stories about marginality.
4. There should be more research about Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought.
5. There should be more research about autoethnography as a viable method of achieving the above.
6. There should be more research about designing and conducting autoethnographic research.
7. There should be more research on women and workplace discrimination.
8. There should be more research on discrimination against women of color.
9. There should be mentoring for secondary African-American women principals.
10. There should be research about how Critical Race Theory is implicated in education especially in school policies and practices and in the preparation of teachers and administrators.

Questions of Interest

1. Since women can enter all levels of education, and since women have the same educational training as their male counterparts, and since there are laws against discrimination based on gender, why are there still so few women in educational administration, especially African-American women in our schools?
2. Do institutional obstacles limit women's entry and advancement in school administration?
3. What changes can be made to the system so that qualified African-American women have access to administrative positions?

4. How is Critical Race Theory implicated in education today especially in school policies and practices and in the preparation of teachers and administrators?
5. What is Critical Race Theory doing for education?
6. Why are most African-American women stopped at the middle school level as a head principal or assistant principal at the high school level?

Summary of Findings

This study provided stories and insights about me and three African-American female administrators. This study showed how these African-American female administrators experienced many more barriers than their White female and male counterparts. They witnessed the "boys club" by entering the administration. Only the chosen "White boys" got the top jobs. The African-American women in this study felt unappreciated, ignored, isolated, devastated, excluded, unsupported, devalued, and displaced.

This study begins to demonstrate that these barriers constitute evidence of discriminatory practices. The biggest discrimination was how to respond to an un-level playing field. The jobs we were seeking should not automatically be given to the good ole' boys. Another barrier is representative of us. In other words, there were no minorities or females on the interview teams. Another barrier was that we could not network like White folks. Their circles and our circles were not the same. In other words, we cannot network because the circles do not overlap.

In spite of all the barriers, we African-American female administrators experienced, we are still here. We are resilient, irrepressible, and ebullient. We can and we have been knocked down many times, but still we happily rise. These barriers

cannot and will not keep us down because we are phenomenal women. Even though we have been excluded, ignored, misunderstood, and discriminated against, we rise.

Still I Rise

By: Dr. Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Believe it or not, we have dodged bullets. We have been shot at several times. These were deliberate hits not random shots. We have come through the guerilla warfare unfortunately not unscathed. The obstacle course has been grueling. As we almost made it through the course, there were other challenges added. We did not lack confidence, so the course did not divert us from our mission. We were prepared for the warfare. Every day we put on the armor of God, Ephesians 6: 10-18. We put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and our feet were fitted with peace. We shielded ourselves with faith, we put on the helmet of salvation, and we carried the word of God; we prayed always. This armor kept us alive. I am still bleeding, but I am alive.

Robert Frost said there were two roads that diverged in the woods, and he chose the one less traveled. I thought about my career for quite a long time. I took the road less traveled. It has made all the difference for me. I love being an educator. I love the interaction with students. I love the journey. Despite all the warfare, they were unable to steal my joy. It has been worth my thirty-nine years.

I will not waste another minute lamenting about what could have been. Sidney Sheldon got it right when he wrote, *Nothing Last Forever*. We all are repositories for our stories. Anyone who has a story should have the opportunity to tell their story. I am excited that I had my chance.

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Appendix A

IRB Informed Consent

701-A-1

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: Barriers of African American Women In Secondary Administration
Principal Investigator: Cheryl A. Monts
Department: Educational Administration Curriculum Supervision

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted at Professional Development Center in Lawton, Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an African-American woman in secondary administration.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study
The purpose of this study is:

To make sure others are aware of how African-American women in secondary administration feel invisible, unappreciated and ignored.

Number of Participants
About three people will take part in this study.

Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Each participant will be asked questions and their answers will be audio taped.

Length of Participation
The interviews will be one hour and thirty minutes in length.

This study has the following risks:
There are not risks in this study.

Some research designs require that the full intent of the study not be explained prior to participation. Although we have described the general nature of the tasks that you will be asked to perform, the full intent of the study may not be explained to you until after the completion of the study. At that time, we may provide you with a full debriefing which will include an explanation of the hypothesis that was tested and other relevant background information pertaining to the study. You will also be given an opportunity to ask any questions you have about the hypothesis and the procedures used in the study.

Benefits of being in the study are
None

APPROVED
MAR 3 0 2011
OU NC IRB

APPROVAL
MAR 2 9 2012
EXPIRES

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study. (Include payment, reimbursement, class credit, etc. Explain when disbursement will occur and conditions of payment (e.g., if compensation will be reduced for early withdrawal)).

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Waivers of Elements of Confidentiality (Delete this section if not applicable.)

Your name will not be linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. Please select one of the following options

_____ I consent to being quoted directly.

_____ I do not consent to being quoted directly.

_____ I consent to having my name reported with quoted material.

_____ I do not consent to having my name reported with quoted material

Audio Recording of Study.

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No.

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at 580-695-0350, cmonts@lawtonps.org. My Advisor is Dr. Williams Frick (405-325-5978), frick@ou.edu.

APPROVED APPROVAL
MAR 30 2011 MAR 29 2012
OU NC IRB EXPIRES

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury. 580-357-0694

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature Date

APPROVED
MAR 30 2011
OU NC IRB

APPROVAL
MAR 29 2012
EXPIRES

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1Q. How old are you?

2Q. What is your educational background?

3Q. What is your marital status?

4Q. Do you have children? If so, how many? Their ages and gender?

5Q. What were your parents' educational status?

6Q. Do you have siblings?

7Q. What is their educational background?

8Q. Where do you fall chronologically?

9Q. What is your present position?

10Q.How many years of teaching experience did you have prior to becoming a principal?

11Q. How many years have you been in the district?

12Q. How long after you started applying for an administrative job were you granted the position?

13Q. So you are not from Oklahoma?

14Q.You are coming in from which state?

15 Q. How long have you been at your present position?

16 Q. How many years were you employed as a principal in this district?

17 Q. Why did you choose education as your major?

18Q. What were your dreams as an educator? Did you reach them?

19Q: When you first started your career as an educator, describe how you felt, if anything has changed, and, if so, why?

20Q. What change did you face upon assuming principalship, and how did you respond to the challenge?

Q. How did you respond to that challenge?

Q. That was part of my question, how did you respond to those challenges? In other words your challenge, was it to be a challenge to jump from one to the other position so your challenge was for you to try to do what they wanted you to do, is that correct?

21Q. What barriers and obstacles did you encounter as an administrator?

Q. Okay. So these are some of the barriers?

22Q. List words that describe your experience as a secondary school administrator?

23Q. What are barriers you faced by being a woman and an African-American, and was it more so gender or ethnicity?

24Q. In your journey to advancement, what barriers did you encounter?

25Q. If you were moved to a different position, how was that a barrier?

26Q. What characteristics attributed to your success as an administrator?

27Q. Even though there were barriers in your career as an administrator, what has attribute to your success?

28Q. Describe yourself as a leader?

29Q. What advice would you have for African- American women who want to enter the principalship?

30Q. In your opinion and past experiences, what change can be made to the system so that qualified African- American women have an equitable chance to administrative positions?

31Q. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Q. Are you looking at a high school campus, or a middle school campus, or the head of either one?

Appendix C

Raw Interview Data from Participants

Participant A/Sophia	Participant B/Charlene	Participant C/Ramona
1Q. 65	1Q. 60	1Q. 47
2Q. Degree of Elementary Education Masters in Reading, Certification in counseling and in secondary administration, Doctorate in education administration curriculum and supervision.	2Q. I am currently working on my doctorate in administration.	2Q. Presently I just finished my doctorate degree in administration from the University of Oklahoma. It is in EACS, Education Administration Curriculum- I can't remember the rest of it- but my specialization is in education technology.
3Q. I am married.	3Q. I have been married; well let me see, well for a long time.	3Q. I am married and have been for 21 years.
4Q. I have two children by birth one by adoption and a grandchild I am raising. My son is 48. My daughter is 45. My son is twenty-eight and my grandson is six.	4Q. I have two children. The youngest is 39 and the oldest is 43.	4Q. I have two children, one is 18 and one is 15.
5Q. Honestly, I have no idea. Mother died when I was three years old. I am pretty sure my father had no education beyond high school.	5Q. My mother was – she was an RN and she has worked on her doctorate, she has gotten all the way down to the point of getting her dissertation at the University of Oklahoma. Her background was in English. My father had his Bachelors in Mathematics from Langston University.	5Q. My father has a Master's in Education- he actually had two Masters, he had one in counseling, and one in Education Administration. My mother had four years in college. She didn't receive her BS degree but she was there for four years.
6Q. I have a brother and two sisters. They are all deceased.	6Q. I have seven living. I am the oldest of eight. I have one brother that is deceased, three more sisters and three brothers.	6Q. I have two brothers.
7Q. I am the only one in	7Q. I have a brother who	7Q. My youngest brother

my family who went to college.	is retired navy, high school. Another has a Master's in Business; He is retired military and is working in the business field now. I have a sister who has a Masters in Mathematics and is retired from NASA. I have a sister who is a housewife, but she is pretty sharp. I have another sister who has her bachelor's in Business and she is retired military and now works for Lockheed.	has his Master's in Education Administration and is working on his specialist Degree for his Doctorate, and my other brother, directly behind me has two Associates Degrees, but he did not finish his BS Degree.
8Q. I am the fourth child.	8Q. The Oldest.	8Q. The Oldest.
9Q. Retired.	9Q. That is a joke. My present position is Executive Grant Writer for the district. I have just recently been transferred to that position so I do not really know what I am doing.	9Q. Assistant Principal.
10Q. 18 years.	10Q. 13 years.	10Q. Seven years.
11Q. I have been in the district for 32 years.	11Q. I have been in the district for 39 years.	11Q. I have been in the district since 1997.
12Q. It was two years but it was not enthusiastically given. It was granted because of a lawsuit.	12Q. Hmmm- I guess I applied for about five years.	12Q. It took a while. I did not get promoted- I actually started in the district in 1997. I had my Administrative Certificate when I first entered the state of Oklahoma but when you come in because I am a military dependent you have to have everything converted over to Oklahoma. So, I had it but I had to go to the State Department to get my waiver. I was not actually promoted until

		2004.
13Q. No.	13Q. Yes.	13Q. No.
14Q. I have been here for a long while. My husband was in the military. My home is Alabama.	14Q. I have always been here.	14Q. I was coming from Texas, but I was born in Louisiana. I am a military dependent so I moved around a little bit.
15Q. Two years retired.	15Q. Twenty days.	15Q. Eight years.
16Q. Nine years as assistant principal.	16Q. Head principal for seven and a half years.	16Q. Eight years as assistant principal.
17Q. Something I have always wanted to even as a little girl. When playing as a child I was always the teacher.	17Q. A suggestion by my mother. I did not want to be in education because I did not feel that Blacks advanced in education because you do not see a lot of Blacks at the top of the ladder in education, so I really did not want that. I wanted to be an executive and I did not want to do that but my mother suggested I go into education.	17Q. I did not actually choose education as a major, actually it chose me. My father was an educator, and administrator, and all my aunts and uncles were educators and administrators. They basically told all of us, my cousins, not to go into education. When I got into the Army I found that, basically, I was doing the same thing. I had to work up schedules, and make out schedules, I was teaching classes, and I even had to help some of them learn how to write checks. I was reserving buildings, working with sources, and conducting training. I decided it would be as easy to be in education. So, when I got out of the Army in 1992, I went into education. My degree is not actually in education, it is in physics. I have a BS in Physics.
18Q. Actually I believe I have achieved my dreams since I first started. When I first started all I wanted to do	18Q. My dreams as an educator was to be a superintendent, I did not want to be in the classroom. I have not	18Q. I think that I was a little naïve when I came into education. When I left the Army I had two choices- to go into

was teach. Once I became a teacher I was thirsty for more and I continued until I reached a higher level.	achieved that status yet. I always felt like I could come in and manage a district and have an outstanding school system where kids could really be achieving and advancing, and be at the top of the world. So, no, I have not achieved that goal.	education, which was sort of in my blood, or I could go into medical science. So I chose education. Also, I am a military dependent so you can always get a job. But, I am trying to think back. My dream was to make a difference, which is all I wanted. I wanted to make a difference and I truly believed that was the goal of every educational administrator. Now, I do feel that I have made a difference, but I also have become a little more cynical. As I said, I was a little more naïve and think that everybody was the same way. Everyone does not come into education to make a difference. They are here just to make pay checks.
19Q: When I first graduated from college in 1977 my dream was to find the perfect job. I went on many interviews. At first it looked good before school in 1977 but that was just before I got a position as an elementary kindergarten teacher.	19Q: Yes. First, when I started my career in education I thought we had moved beyond the *Brown versus Board of Education*, and the further I stayed in education the more I was exposed to prejudices, and racism, and inequities that I could not believe still existed in certain ways, even after living here in Lawton with the integrated schools and things of that nature, I thought we should all have equal status. But I realize the more that I stayed in	19Q: I truly believe that children come first and we are here to educate them. The only way they can truly be successful is through an education. I was always raised that no matter what comes at you, whether they are downsizing, or what, they can never take away your education. Now I have come to understand that everybody in education does not have the same philosophy. A lot of it is politics. I have come to realize how much politics has to do with education.

	education, the more the darker the causes got, and I realized that racism had not really changed and that we were still segregated. We are on a different level now.	
20Q. I did not come out of the classrooms exactly, I was a counselor. I had been a counselor for eight years. I transitioned from junior high counselor to high school administrator and I guess the biggest change was trying to be the person they wanted me to be as an administrator. **Q. That was part of my question, how did you respond to those challenges? In other words your challenge, was it to be a challenge to jump from one to the other position so your challenge was for you to try to do what they wanted you to do, is that correct?** I guess I would say that in the transition I went into a situation where the principal at the school was a new principal and she was from out of the district. She did not know me and I did not know her. It is always hard to conform to others and I did. I have always known who I was, who I wanted to be, and what I wanted to do.	20Q. One is that I realized the headaches, or the doors would shut down when I did not agree with who the powers that be wanted. They once wanted to hire a head coach and I still have the letters to the community what it meant to hire Randy Breeze, who is a very prejudice person, and when I submitted my decision, all of a sudden the decision gets lost. They could not find it. The decision was given to my supervisor. He swore that he turned it in and did not know where it was. But it was their idea because they did not want that person to be the head football coach. When I had to hire counselors, the counselor that I wanted they did not want to bring that person in and I was told that I could not do that. That was when I had to hire ---- --- Adams, and I could not understand that either. There were positions and things like that, that I felt would be best for the students and for the student body	20Q. Okay, The first thing when I took the job I had a challenge because I really did not know whether it was for my abilities, which I did have, or whether it was because of the law suits. I had to overcome that first of all. And I decided that no matter why I am here, I am going to get the job done. Now, I had a principal who had a different philosophy. He carried less about children, He was all into politics. He did not have a vision and I was surprised by that, because I thought that if you were head principal you should have goals. That is what I was taught. When I had to go back to education classes that is also what I was taught in the military. I was taught that leadership starts at the top. I found out that is not the way it always flows. Sometimes you have to do things in spite of what is standing in your way. So, my challenges were working with the head principal who was only there to use the job as a stepping stone for a better position.

Sometimes it is difficult because I do not play games very well and I guess that was my hardest part was to play the game.	there, but I was flat told no. Applications- I couldn't go over there and pick the best applicants, I had to take who they gave me to interview. She pulled the folders and unless someone called me personally to interview them otherwise I would not get to do that. One of the people I wanted to interview was the Superintendent's wife. She would be coming to Modern High School and they said no, they could not do that. There were certain people that were hand's off to be employed. **Q. How did you respond to that challenge?** One of the things I told the Superintendent at the time – how do you expect me to fill up the scores in this building, one of the jobs I had at Modern High School, test scores for the school were about to be tested too because they did not want one of their high schools to be placed as an at-risk school. But yet, the staff they had at the building was not the best teachers that could have been hired for the district. So, I told them, "You have expected me to pull up scores but you won't allow me to hire the best,	

	or even interview the best." And, so it was kind of a debate on that issue. Finally, I figured out ways to get around that. One of the people that I wanted for an English position was a teacher, his daughter, when interviewed the application, I was not given the application for an English position. He called me and asked if I would interview his daughter. And I told him the application was not at the board. He said, "Yes, it is." So, when I called the board back and asked for her application then I was allowed to interview her and to hire her. So, those were the type of things that you had to fight this battle. Another position was when I needed a math position that I needed. I needed a top math teacher because most of the teacher's in my building did not have certification to teach calculus nor the higher mathematics, and the person that I knew could they already had teaching at the alternative school. They kept telling me that I could not bring him over there. But I asked, "Why would you have a person who is a chemistry and math major, you know, over in the alternative school,	

	and that person could come over here and teach your upper level math classes in this building?" I do not understand that. I had to fight this battle to get him. Another thing is when I did not have an administrative assistant and so I had approached the Superintendent and told him I need an administrative assistant over here and they said that I did not qualify for one. And I said that I do not understand- how do you qualify for an administrative assistant? They said, because of the type of kids you have. But, I said "You have an administrative assistant at MacArthur High School and you have one at Eisenhower High School, and this school is in the center of the city and you have more students at this building, but you say I do not qualify for an administrative assistant?" You know- things like the PA system- I told them you need a new PA system in this building. But they said I had to wait my turn. What turn? You put in a PA system at Eisenhower while I was assistant principal there and here you are three years later going back in to put in a new PA system, and this school has not had a PA	

	system since the building was built. “So, how do you justify that?” The same thing happened when I approached them about the library. I said, “Okay, you have already remodeled another library and you have gone over to another school to build them a library, and then gone back over to the remodeled school to build them a new library- when is it Model High School’s turn to get a new library?” The one that they currently have is because of a battle. You fight with them- these kids are entitled to what you give to everybody else. So, those kinds of things happened.	
21Q. Resistance to, I guess an African-American educator. You encounter a lot of obstacles and barriers that you have to get over. Basically, I saw a lot of things in the district that were not fair to Black educators. I came out of a situation where I worked to be an African-American administrator. I went into another situation where I went into somewhat of a good-old-boy system. Obstacles that you have barriers with, that you have to overcome, is trying to	21Q. I can tell you about the funding too. **Q. Okay. So these are some of the barriers?** Yeah. I remember that when I first took over as head principal the enrollment was like 800 and some students. Parents were not moving into part of town and the enrollments were real low. After my first year, the next year I had over a thousand. I got to where I did not have enough books for the students to be issued books in my building. So, I purchased books so that all of my students would have	21Q. The teachers. Again, I was naïve. I felt that when I was working in my class and everybody was working in their class when you started walking into the classroom you see that is not true. When you step into the classroom you can just tell by the atmosphere whether or not that person is a good teacher. In just a couple of seconds you can see it. I was not aware of that in my classroom. I just assumed everybody was working and everybody had the best interests at heart for the child. I found out that some teachers are

maintain who you are and not compromise your values and your beliefs. And I am not one to compromise. Sometimes it was very difficult- you just have to be true to who you are, and people have to accept it. In my case, most of the time it was not accepted. I think that the district I am, or was, currently working in.	books. The next year my enrollment was 1200 and something. I went back to the Superintendent and I told them that I needed to buy more books because my enrollment was now over 1200 and almost1300 students. And, they said, well we will give you the money. I said, but that was the promise you gave me last time. It is not fair to my students that my money that I use to manage the building that I have to use buy text books. When you told me that last year I spent money out of my budget to buy text books. After I requested, you sent out a memo across the district and the other schools, got books. I had to pay for my students' books out of my building budget. I said that here we are for the second year. Are we going to do the same thing? Do I have to take money out of my budget to buy my students' text books and the district would buy the books for the other two schools? They said "we will give you your money back- creative financing." That is when I knew how the superintendent handled money. How is it that you are giving me back my money but my inline is still the same? I am not	vengeful, and that they hold things. I was just amazed. I was not aware of that. I have also found out that a lot of the teachers do not look at the big picture. I always knew my administrators were working while I was working, I never doubted that, but what I see now is that a lot of the teachers feel like the administrators are not working. I guess they think that they are drinking coffee, or talking on the phone, or what they do is not a hard job, and that administrators are not important until they have a major discipline issue then they want our attention.

	seeing the money that you owe from last year and I am not seeing it from the previous year, the two years that I spent money. You put up here that this is my book money but somewhere in the budget you have taken money from that so that my total inline is still the same. So these are the battles that you have to constantly keep fighting, and fighting, and fighting. Funding was a nightmare.	
22Q. Difficult, biased, challenging, and unfair.	22Q. Devastating, prejudice, invisibility, and unethical.	22Q. Words that describe my experience? I would say frustrating leadership, lack of vision, politics, and lack of institutional basics or methodology. A lot of times we will just do something and we do not even check to see whether or not that method is working but when a new thing came on the shelf we were notified. Those are the negative things. But there was a positive side. I found that you can only make a difference. As I said leadership is important. I have seen improvement in student ability. Following researched methods does work. Fellowship is important as well as leadership. And I would say it is rewarding, but you sometimes have to go through the negatives to

		get to the rewards.
23Q. That is a good one because I could write a book about that one. When I first applied to become an administrator in the district, there were nine Caucasian men that applied and me. I am a female, and I am African-American therefore I was the only female and African-American. Every applicant got an interview except me. The reason I was given was because they wanted to hire a White male and did not interview the female or the African-American. Ethnicity. Gender played a role in it but I think being African-American played more of a role because in my opinion there are only so many positions that opened up that would say they would allow so many minority hires based on the number of other nationalities that they hire. To give you an example, like we have three high schools and not one high school has an African- American for a minority principal, they are White Caucasian. We have four middle schools and not one African-American principal was a minority or African-American of	23Q. I was never on the same playing field with everyone else. I was never allowed to be. I was told in so many ways to sit back at the back and wait your turn. I am watching the students at the two other high schools getting things but I am being told to wait your turn. There was never a fairness out there- an equity. The walls were always up. If I asked for anything dealing with my students, I had board members who felt like I should not approach the district for certain things, yet they were giving them to other students. So I am trying to figure out why they were so prejudiced against the school? But, it had nothing to do with the school. It was against me. That is when I realized that they felt like I could go in there and turn that school around like I did. I think it had to do with me personally. I am Black and that is it. I think it was more so the ethnicity than gender. This Black woman came in and I was not needed now. I knew what I was talking about and I could stand before them and carry on an intelligent conversation. I knew what I was talking about	23Q. I would say it is the same thing that I faced in the military. It is rather like a mirror society. A woman has to prove that she is just as good as a man. I remember my mother telling me that when you are a woman and you are Black you are going to have to be better than everybody else just to get the job, and that is just the way it is. The ceiling, the glass corporate ceiling has gone away, but that is not true. I have noticed that a lot of time, at least in the district that I am in, they have to write a lot of letters before they get promoted and seldom get promoted before they are 40 years old. But the men can get promoted quickly. It depends on who likes them. So, I would say that I have had more problems being a female than in being Black. It is the same way in the military. Now, of course, Black men have some of the same problems as well, but when I look at how males are treated. Overall, I would say my biggest barrier would be my gender.

assistants.	and knew what my expectations were. I am a highly intelligent person.	
24Q. Interviews first of all. Kindly- I guess what I want to say is like kindly announcements of available positions. It is my theory, and an unproven theory, but the district that I worked in I always believed that before they opened the position I believed that already knew who they were going to hire from who applied. This was an obstacle, because you were not going to be chosen even if you had an interview.	24Q. I guess the biggest one was probably unethical, the ways that things were being done. Like when an application went out you knew who had the job before you could even down on a piece of paper. How they would take job descriptions. You knew you had the qualifications, but if the person they wanted did not have qualifications they would re-write it so it would fit the person. You were thinking- you know- you are trying to be the best person you can be for your job, and seek the higher degrees and all of the qualifications so that your credentials could be laid out there, and you realize that does not matter, especially when the superintendent calls you into a meeting and he makes a statement to all of us and says, "Look where you can get without having your doctor's, and proud of it." That you can be at the top and do not have to achieve those things. Here you are looking at a person with a high school diploma that makes more money than anyone in the district in finance. This	24Q. I was not encouraged to go into administration. I found that I had to be motivated myself. When I felt like I could do that within myself and I knew what my father had done, and my uncles, but I was never encouraged to leadership. Standing in the classroom- yes- being a math teacher- yes- I was always encouraged to do that. But when you make that decision that you want to step out of the classroom that is when you see a change in the way that you are treated. Now, this is the first district where I ever received racial comments. Being a military dependent I traveled to different places. I think that here in Lawton I have found that policies and rules are about 15 years behind other states that I have been in. So, it is just the battles that I have had to fight in Oklahoma. My parents and grandparents had always fought these battles for me in my home state of Louisiana and Texas. I am not saying this just to be negative, I am saying that I was told that things are done here in a certain way and that is just the good-old-boy

	person has a high school diploma and she is over the district's finance. Yet, this is an educational institution. I do not have any qualms about it, but when you are pushing education and education is the key to success in the world, you do not show that by showing kids that they can get there by being mediocre. The top honors, the top kids that go to universities, they come out of high school with top honors and take classes with zero credits. But when you have a superintendent that brags about the fact that I can be a superintendent and I do not have to have a doctorate- I guess you do not.	system.
25Q. In my particular position, I applied and was not interviewed but I only got my position through a lawsuit. So I overcame many barriers in order to do so through court proceedings and filing lawsuits and even based on past history, it does not matter. They would continue to do things that would cause people to file lawsuits. I was moved from an assistant principal at a high school to assistant principle at a middle school because I did not- I had an encounter with	25Q. I was placed in a position over support personnel from a high school principal. I was put in the back of the Board of Education.	25Q. For me, here in the district, I am just going to tell you how I feel. I know, supposedly, there is a board with everybody's name on the board, and the names are moved around. I thought maybe my name had been moved to the trash can somewhere and forgotten about. But it was on the board. I do not feel that I had any decisions to make. The assistant superintendent that we have right now, she came in and asked me "what do you think, and what would you like to do in

another assistant principal.		the future?" And, I just told her that the way I feel right now it doesn't matter what I want to do. This only matters what I want to do, it only matters what the system wants me to do. It does not matter what qualifications I think I have it only matters what the system sees me. Sometimes on the outside they do not see the true you. The thing of it is, they do not care. I have been at Central now, this is my 8th year. I have applied but I have never moved. I have my Doctor's now, and I still do not think I will move. I could actually retire as assistant principal at Central and no one, such as my administrators above me, would even see a problem with that.
26Q. Perseverance. Believing in who I am and regardless of what other people think I believe in who I am and what I am capable of doing. And so where others may have thought they never would, but I persevered because I believe in who I am and I trusted in God. I believe what is for me is for me, and if it is God's will nobody else can stand in the way of that.	26Q. Personality. I get along with a lot of people. But when it comes down to serious business I can lay a plan out there and work that plan and I can discipline a person in a very fair manner that they understand when they are not where they are supposed to be and I can help them get to that point. I have strong leadership skills.	26Q. Being self-motivated. Being supported by my family. My husband had to make some sacrifices as well. He is retired military. He chose to retire because I asked him to retire here to support me as I supported him for 20 years. Basically, without that and the support of my family, my church and the support of friends I have made here, it would be very hard to be a success in this district because you do not get comments or any type of

		encouragement.
27Q. Hard work. Going above and beyond what was called for. I worked hard. I always worked harder than my counterparts. Because as an African-American, not as a female, but as an African-American I always thought I had to do more in order not to just shine but to just get a moderate rating to say, well just to say you did your job well, even though you did your job well, you probably did more than anybody else in the building, just to stay abreast of everybody else.	27Q. [no response]	27Q. I have learned to base my success from what I have learned from the children, from the eyes of the children, and from their parents. I actually try to disassociate myself from the opinions I get from the head office or the upper echelon. I do not let it affect me. I feel that they do not understand what I am doing because they do not see what I am doing. Normally, there are a lot of "picks and chooses" that they spend a lot of time on, but the rest of us they could care less about.
28Q. First of all I think a leader is a person who can listen to what others have to say. I truly believe that good leaders are good listeners. You have to listen to the people that you have to lead. Also, to be a good leader you have to know how to be a follower. If you have not been able to follow other people that led then you will have difficulty in getting other people to follow you. Also, I believe you have to have goals, and have to persevere in what you have to do and you have to know where you are going to lead people, and not everybody is going to	28Q. As a leader I think I have the tendency to listen to all sides, fairly democratic, weigh everything and not have particular biases, and to be the best that I can be and I like for my students to be that way. If we settle for anything less than that nine times out of ten most people know that I will not go for that. If it is the best, and at the top, to be the number one person at the top, whatever the program, that is who I am. Working with people, I am very democratic, I like to listen to what people say, and I am very serious about what I do. Education is very	28Q. For myself, I like to be a follower as well as a leader. As a matter-of-fact, I am the type of leader if there is a need for leadership; I am more than willing to follow. That comes from the military as well. Sometimes you need to sit back and learn. I believe that leadership is a life-learning process. And, you have to watch a person so that you can adapt their positive traits, so that when you do end up in a leadership position, you won't make the same mistakes. I am a life-long learner. If you lead one way at one school, and you move to another school, you are

get in line behind you. That is why I think perseverance is so important. You have to really believe in what you are doing in order to get others to follow.	important to me. As far as prejudices, I have struggled with that because I do not see that, but I know that it exists. And people make decisions based on biases and prejudices. So I guess I am very democratic on things. I do not micromanage.	going to have to modify that because the community, the children, and the teachers are all different. I believe there is more than one way to solve a problem. I know that a lot of people think that it has to be this way, or it does not. I also believe that leadership is a team effort. You have to empower others around you and give them the ability to make decisions and the ability to do a task. We have a lot of micromanagers, and I do not believe in micromanagement.
29Q. [no response]	29Q. Do not do it. Not in this district. I watched over the years, and your first year will be the best year. Once you get in there your whole career is going to be "hell." You have to have very strong leadership skills; otherwise, you will not make it.	29Q. I would say- I was thinking about this the other day- If God put you there in that position, you will stay there, if you put yourself there, then you won't stay in that position for long. You have to keep that in your mind. Remember, there are shortcuts to getting a position, but can you look at yourself in the mirror the next morning and be proud of the way you got there. So, you have to be proud of where you end up. You have to have some background. If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. As a female you must carry yourself as a leader at all times. It is important in the way you dress. I don't believe you have to

		bow down and say that you know something bad to do in order to be in this position, because one day you are going to have to stand up. If you get that position by lying on your back remember that one day you are going to have to stand up, and get some background, or no one is going to listen to you. It may be harder to take the long way around or the narrow path, but that is the best way to do it. I think it is important for you to put in some time; you have to earn your dues. You are going to have to do some work. Do not think that you are going to start at the top. If you do, you won't be there for long. If you start at the bottom and work your way up then when you get that position no one can take it away from you.
30Q. I think the changes have to come from the top down. I think that you should have to have a superintendent that is open-minded. You have to have a superintendent that shares with all of the people and not some of the people. You have to have a school board that also is there to work with all of the employees and students and be willing	30Q. File applications online so that decisions can be made based on what can be read on that piece of paper. Once you walk into a room in this district and they see that your face is Black, there will be no equity. I do not think it will ever be. I do not think you will be hired straight out, even if you present your credentials, your skills,	30Q. I was just thinking about when I took the superintendents test it had questions like that, how to insure diversity. First, thing you have to insure that the persons are leaders. If the superintendents believe that then they will do what they can to make it better on minorities, and if they do not truly believe that, then there will be no

to do what is best for all of the employees and all of the students. They have to be willing that if an administrator is not doing right for all of the employees and all of the students that they can be called upon the "carpet." I would say you have to start from the top down. You have to have a willing superintendent to work with everyone and consider everyone's education level, and consider opportunities available no matter what color and what gender, and who they are. Opportunities have to be available for everyone and even all students in this district have the same opportunities as in others.	and your desires, and communicate I do not see it, and that is sad.	more diversity. Women will not have equitable roles. They will not have the power to go with that title. Because if they believe that then they are going to hire other people who believe that. Power is going to flow from the top. If you have principals in there that want strong women, then they are going to hire strong women. If they do not then they are not. If they want strong women teachers then they are going to hire them. That is the problem we have now in the district. They do not want strong people- period. They hire weakness, and then it means that they can dominate them.
31Q. Well, I do not see myself going back to school, however, I do see myself working at the college level, or possibility publishing a book, or doing some other things that are of interest to me. I am not one to just sit around and be idle. In five years I hope to be a published author and teaching in high-ed., not full time, but perhaps as an adjunct professor and also publish parts of my dissertation.	31Q. Still playing the same old game with Lawton Public Schools. Unless the good Lord shows me the lamb in the bush where I can come in here and turn these things around and I think the Federal Government will have to come in here and lay down some heavy hands and do some cleaning up- five years from now- I would like to see myself as a superintendent where I can have a successful district nationally known	31Q. I see myself as a head principal. Right now I am 47. I anticipate being a head principal by the time I am 50. So in five years I see myself with a campus. **Q.Are you looking at a high school campus, or a middle school campus, or the head of either one?** What the district is looking for me is middle school campus, but I think I could be the head of either one.

	that the students who attend that school district would soar regardless of whether they are special ed. or whether they are the smartest students in the world. That is where I would prefer to be. But do I see that actually happening? - No.	

Author's Self-Interview Based On Participant Interview Protocol

1Q. 62
2Q. I have a Bachelors of Science, a Master's of Science and I have a Counseling Certificate, an Administrative Certificate, and I am presently working on my Doctorate Degree.
3Q. I am married.
4Q. I have three children. Two daughters and a son. My daughter is 43, my other daughter is 38, and my son is 34.
5Q. My father had a GED and my mother had three years of college.
6Q. Yes I do.
7Q. I am the oldest of seven.
8Q. My oldest brother – let me start with my sister who is after me. She has three years of college. Brother after that has three and one-half years of college. The brother after that has a degree in zoology and my next brother has three and one-half credits. My next brother which is my fourth has a degree, Bachelors of Science. My last brother has a Bachelor's and a Master's of Science.
9Q. I was in the classroom for 17 years and I was a counselor for 5 years and then I became an Assistant Principal.
10Q. This is my 39th year, coming up.
11Q. I am the Director of Professional Development.
12Q. Seven years.
13Q. I was employed five years as an Assistant Principal and four years as a Head Principal.
14Q. Probably six or seven years before I was granted a position.
15Q. One thing I liked kids, and I liked learning, so I thought about it for a long time and I knew that was my vision.
16Q. Mostly I reached my dreams. My first dream was to just be a teacher in the classroom and I got to do that. Then I wanted to become a head principal eventually at a high school, and no, I did not get the opportunity to be a head high school principal.
17Q. When I first started as an educator I was really excited because I liked being around kids and I knew that was my passion, to be with kids. I wanted to always be with kids. I never wanted to be pulled out of the building to be anywhere else but with children. As it happened, I was pulled out of the building and put in a position where there were no students. And so, I did not have the same passion. I felt like somebody had ripped my heart out. I no longer got to do what I loved to do; I could only do what I was required to do.
18Q. The changes I had to make were to – I was not – I was still empathetic to the students, but at the same time I had to be a disciplinarian as well. I think I did a good transition of being able of showing empathy to the students, and at the same time be a strong disciplinarian. The main thing I wanted to do was to remain around students and let them understand that you can still care for kids and be firm at the same time.
19Q. I think my first obstacle was, and my first barrier, was that the job of principal had been given mostly to men in my district. And I, as a woman in the district, I do not think I was respected as much. When – for instance – when I started to choose the coaches, and to choose the head coaches, like football and those positions. One of the biggest challenges I had was that they wanted my ninth graders to come up to the high school and do weight lifting, and I felt they needed to be trained in weight lifting by the instructors before they allowed these young bodies, kids, to go up to the high school and take weight lifting. And because I disagreed with the high school coaches over that the secondary person over education and I got into a rebuttal about the junior high school kids being able to go to the high school to do weight lifting so they could play football. That was just one of the barriers – many barriers. It did not make any difference what my suggestions were or do I was not allowed to be able to think on my own. If

they were decisions that were made outside the box of the way it had been done, I was called into the office and asked who gave me permission to do that. So, I was stopped on my own from how I could run my building.
20Q. Firm, knowledgeable, worthy, family-oriented.
21Q. First of all, most of the schools, as I said before, were run by men in my district. I am not sure about any other district, but in my district they were mostly white males. We had to have – I was trying to think – we may have had one African American man and a couple of African American women. But the barriers were that we were not given the same opportunities that those jobs, that those jobs were already pre-selected before we even interviewed for those jobs, so to interview for those jobs it didn't make any difference how much education we had, or how intelligent we were. It did not make any difference how well-spoken we were. Those jobs were already promised to someone else. We had to wait our turn, as we were told. So, I guess the barriers both being male or female and the ethnicity of it all, all of it played into being a barrier. I am not sure whether there were more females in ethnicity, but I know that every time we got ready to do something, another door was closed in our face. We were constantly being bombarded with barriers.
22Q. My first journey, it took me almost 17, maybe 20-25 times I had to apply for just an Assistant Principal's job, and finally a principal's job. That was the first thing was just getting my foot in the door. Once I got in the door as an Assistant Principal, there was another barrier. I continually tried to apply for a Head Principal's job. The rules were changed. The rules changed depending on who they wanted to put in those positions. Another barrier that I faced was that some of the jobs that were given to me were jobs that nobody else wanted to do. As I came in as an Assistant Principal I had to stamp books, I had to do secretarial work, I had to do all of the registration, and I had to do all of the scheduling. And, the other principal, all he did was discipline and the head principal did PR work. So, you had one worker, and that was me.
23Q. Well – first of all – in my building the building was running smoothly and everyone got along very well, we were like family. Everybody in the building, that was including the custodians, the secretaries. The barrier that came was when they made all of the decisions for us. Then, another barrier was that we had good test scores. Why would that be a barrier? Because all of a sudden they had decided they were going to move from junior high to middle schools. So we went to visit a couple of schools at different places, and when we came back the secondary executive director wanted to know how we liked going to visit. My comment was that I thought it was good, but I also thought they played a little too much. The next thing I knew our superintendent was coming in and said there was going to be some moves in our building and to get ready for middle school. I started doing some research on some things they would do in middle school, so I had gotten my seventh grade teachers together and we had started to come up with how everybody was going to have the same heading on their papers and how we were going to do this. And then I wanted to switch to the eighth grade and the ninth grade teachers. But, before I could get that done, I was snatched out of that building and moved to a different position with no explanation and no reason why. When the superintendent asked me did I want to know why I was moving I said "No, sir." He said "I am moving you because I can." So I never found out why I was moved. And, then he said he did not think I came on board quick enough to be a middle school principal.
24Q. I think because I was fair. I was fair to the students, I was fair to the teachers, and I cared about everybody in that building. I came in that building early in the morning; I went around and checked on my people in the cafeteria who got there at 4:00-5:00 o'clock in the morning. I went and checked on the custodian staff. I welcomed my secretaries as they came in. I stood at the door and I welcomed every student that came into that school. So, I wanted them to know that not only could I be firm, but I could be fair. And, that I wanted the building to run smoothly. I wanted them to know that this was going to be the place that they could come every

morning and feel safe and sound.
25Q. My faith and my family.
26Q. I think I was a successful administrator, because, again, I say that it was a safe place for the students to come. It was a family-oriented place for the teachers to come. All the counselors, the teachers, all got along very well. There was so much cohesion in that building. How did I know it was successful? Because people enjoyed coming there. We would be there long hours many times. The teachers and the administrators, we would be there until six o'clock in the afternoon not realizing we had been there all the time. If that is true, why was I moved – I have no clue. My whole thing is that it was White privilege. I was moved because we were being successful and they didn't like it, especially coming from an African-American woman.
27Q. I think I am a visionary person. All of the time that I was leading I knew exactly how we were going to get there. I knew what it was going to take. Sometimes we would have a book study. Sometimes we would find out what new things were that were being implemented around the state. An instructional leader – that is who I was. It was my job to keep myself and my students on top of things. That is who I was. I was not a lazy person. I was always willing to pull up my sleeves and help them do it. We were all hard workers and we did it together.
28Q. I would hope that I would tell them to pursue their dreams. That maybe it would take a little bit longer and maybe they would have to work a little bit harder. But I think that they would have to dream, and the day that we no longer have a dream, then we are no longer visionaries.
29Q. In order for that to happen in this district I think, first of all we should have some classes on social justice, equality, on tolerance, and on women issues. I think that this district would have to understand that we have some women in this district that are more qualified than men and some of those more qualified women just happen to be African-Americans. I also want them to understand that because we are African-American women doesn't mean that we are less educated, less articulate, and lazy people. That is a stereotype, and the only way we can get rid of a stereotype is that we have to educate them on who we are, and how we got where we are.
30Q. Retired.